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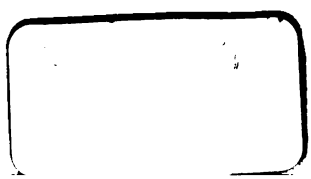

THE PETREL:

A TALE OF THE SEA.

BY

A NAVAL OFFICER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE PETREL;

OR,

LOVE ON THE OCEAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE number of the pirates who had leaped over the bows of the Thames and swam ashore, to avoid the irresistible charge of Tandy and Serjeant Mills, had been estimated at twenty-five, though an accurate calculation, under such circumstances, was admitted to be impracticable. Their escape was a serious evil, and it was feared might lead to disastrous consequences; but it had been unavoidable. The Sergeant had truly said that he could have shot down

many of them had he not been restrained by positive orders, forbidding him to fire a shot; but those orders had been indispensable, for as soon as Herbert had satisfied himself that the enemy, who greatly outnumbered his party, had divided their force, it became his paramount object to cut in pieces, and if possible to destroy entirely, the division which occupied the decks, without giving any alarm to those carousing with so much noise in the cabin, and who it was natural to suppose were the chiefs or officers. It was clear, therefore, that a single shot fired would have alarmed the most formidable section of his enemies, whose noisy orgies had so well seconded his well-devised plans; and the escape of any of the leaders to the shore would have given tenfold importance to the flight of those already landed, and who not having been fired upon nor pursued, soon took courage and began to entertain hopes of safety.

They found themselves in a small rocky

nook, shut in upon all sides with inaccessible precipices, the only outlet being a small dry watercourse, ever the best, and generally the only road in such a country. Into this the pirates plunged, anxious to increase their distance from the stern enemies before whom they had twice fled. For some time, urged by their fears, they hurried on, over almost impracticable ground, in breathless haste; but having advanced a considerable distance, and hearing no pursuers, they began to feel some return of confidence. Exceedingly fatigued, without provisions, and what was much more important, having no water, they suffered severely from thirst, which was of course painfully aggravated by their recent indulgence, from which they had yet hardly recovered. Overweening temerity soon succeeded to terror: they slackened their pace, and began to loiter along indolently; for there was no order, or regularity in their movements, nor did any one lay claim to authority over others. They

had no common plan of action, neither collectively any definite object in view. Each man was bent upon saving his own life by flight, and upon supporting it afterwards, by any possible means, however atrocious.

Should they surprise a village, rapine and murder were their trade; a sudden night attack, and indiscriminate slaughter, their favourite mode of warfare. And if they proceeded in profound silence, it was not by concert or agreement, still less from orders to that effect. Every prowling savage, biped, or quadruped, when urged by hunger and thirst, hoping to escape his enemy, or to surprise his prey, is silent, and cautious by instinct.

They had begun to feel, that much farther progress in so rugged and difficult a track, would require efforts beyond their exhausted energies; their naked feet were sorely cut and bruised, for this was the self-same watercourse in which the gallant Chartres had experienced so much difficulty; and of which he

had made so unfavourable a representation. Too soon it led these bloodthirsty fugitives to the cavern, where Mrs. Darcie and her daughters had found refuge.

As slowly and wearily they dragged their toilworn limbs, over the rolling stones, and pointed crags, a sudden glare of light burst upon their view. It was the reflection of a weak and flickering flame upon the broad canvas screen, which closed the cavern's mouth. The hope of plunder and of prey at once roused their dormant ferocity into full vigour; their terrors and their fatigues were instantly forgotten. We have seen with what delight they hailed this unhoped for discovery; and with what tumultuous fury they had stabbed the sleeping sentinels, and rushed into the cavern.

Herbert, even whilst issuing the few orders which the circumstances of the case so imperatively required from him, with that same coolness and precision which he had so happily

prescribed to himself, and with such painful efforts maintained from first to last, did not now overlook the possible consequences of permitting so numerous a gang of infuriated miscreants to wander at large along a coast, upon some part of which, and probably not far off, might be found those he most prized, whose recent dangers had almost shaken his reason, and compelled him to resort to extraordinary precautions for the assurance of that power of self-command which had never before failed him.

"True," he said mentally, "they are protected by brave men, well commanded. This I have seen nobly proved; but what prudence, what courage, can avail against the sudden onslaught of a band of armed and ferocious wretches like these!—at night too."

"Anstey," he said aloud, "send the reports to the Captain. I must pursue and destroy these villains to prevent the possibility of farther mischief. Come, Darby," he added to

the brave boy, who was ever at his side, "jump into the boat. We must complete our task."

They landed with a chosen party at the very spot where Darby had seen the pirates scramble on shore, whilst he had been lamenting the orders which forbad the marines to fire upon them.

Herbert was well pleased to find that there was but one narrow and difficult outlet from this confined landing-place; a fact which the indefatigable and sagacious Chouchow soon ascertained, dark as it was amongst those wild and gloomy rocks. No bloodhound could follow up the traces of a flying enemy with more accuracy than could this strange and wilful lad.

They hastened forward, confident that the fugitives could not be very far in advance of them. Herbert, with his characteristic prudence and foresight, had brought a moderate supply of water, which, in a flight and pur-

suit, where both parties, after having started in a state of exhaustion from previous exertion and excitement, must have to contend with all the difficulties of such a route, gave a most important advantage to the pursuers, equal or nearly so to the advantage of the distance in advance which had been gained by the fugitives. And there was no loitering with Herbert's party. Forward they went, manfully contending with the difficulties of the route, whilst Chouchow, who appeared to be fatigue-proof, still as he went on searched every cleft in the rocks on either side, and pryed closely into every nook which could possibly afford either outlet or concealment.

"Ha! ha!" he muttered, as he dragged forth a trembling wretch from a dark recess, into which animal instinct had guided him for concealment in death.

It was wonderful that a human being so wounded could have travelled so far in such a road; but wild and savage man supports

bodily injuries, under a tythe of which his civilized fellow would sink and die.

Chou could get no information from the captive.

"Come on! come on!" muttered the impetuous Herbert, himself insensible to fatigue, wounded though he was. "The sight of this dying wretch tells us that we are on their traces, and not far behind them." And he darted forward with renewed vigour.

A musket-shot was heard close in front of them, and a wild shout, and then two more shots followed.

"Hark to that, sir!" said Darby.

And the agitated pair rushed on, excited almost to phrenzy. No obstacle could retard them now. Their panting followers could no longer keep pace with them.

The smouldering fire, on the edge of the ravine, flashed suddenly upon them; shouts and cries from the cavern directed their impetuous course to the very spot which the

detestable objects of their pursuit had only reached a few minutes before, little suspecting that the horrid shouts of joy called forth by the first sight of their helpless victims would direct and hasten the avenger.

We have minutely described the entrance of the ruffians into the cavern, the fall of Chartres, and the fierce contest which so happily followed, whilst each claimed the prize for himself. Precious moments were thus gained as well as lost; for ere the demoniac shout of the victors had ceased, or one blood-stained hand could grasp its shuddering victim, a cry was heard from voices in rapid advance,—a cry preconcerted to announce the approach of friends, and to prevent fatal errors, in a sudden night assault. Such was Herbert's cautious foresight.

"Petrel—Herbert—Darby Darcie!"—were the welcome words which fell like heavenly music on the ears of Mrs. Darcie and her daughters. A single cheer followed.

How changed was all within the cavern in a moment. The pirates stood aghast; for in those voices, in that cheer, they had recognized the terrible presence of their recent conquerors. That cheer was their death doom. Each stood spell-bound and palsied with terror. They dared not fight—they dared not fly.

All this had passed in one brief moment, when Herbert rushed in, frantic with rage and apprehension. Darkness itself could not conceal Norah from his piercing gaze.

A hideous ruffian in front of Norah was instantly cut down, while Norah herself sank fainting in his arms; and, utterly forgetting the dangerous villains around him, Herbert's self-possession, so long, so painfully sustained, gave way at once. He saw but one object.

Darby Darcie, who had followed like his shadow, buried his dagger in the breast of the trembling unresisting villain who had assailed his mother. And Mrs. Darcie, terrified, delighted, overwhelmed by a rush of inde-

scribable emotion, found herself embraced by her brave boy.

Panic-stricken, and not waiting to see the number of their assailants, the savages rushed out of the cavern; but it was already too late for flight. Herbert's band met them without, and almost cut them in pieces, though a few escaped towards the cove, which was, indeed, the only line of retreat open to them. But as they emerged from amongst the intervening trees in headlong flight, they knew not whither, they encountered Yarker, with the advanced party of seamen from the cove; who having been alarmed by the firing and shouts so unexpectedly heard from their all-important outpost, were hastening forward to support and defend their friends.

The moon had risen over the sea, behind the advancing party, flashing brightly on the dark faces of the pirates as they broke cover. There was no possibility of further retreat or concealment for them; and the last vile rem-

nant of the bloodthirsty compound of half-civilized ruffians and ferocious savages which had formed the crew of the Fra Diavolo, fell without striking a blow.

Mrs. Darcie's reason was almost shaken by these sudden changes. Had she not seen at one magic word the terrors under which her very soul shuddered transferred in one instant, with tenfold force, to the reckless ruffians before whom she had trembled? Had she not seen them turned, as it were, to stone; and trembling in their turn? Had she been really rescued? Was she indeed blessed with the support of her brave boy?

She felt his fond caress; she heard that well-known voice; whilst Emma clung to him in clamorous joy. And yet she feared it was a dream. Should she not wake again to scenes of horror? But Darby's voice soothes her agitated mind; and tears come to her relief.

Norah, faint and exhausted, was conscious

still. Her secret prayer had been heard. She had never altogether lost hope that Herbert and Darby would save her; and now her fondest hopes were realized. They were all rescued. They were all safe, and she was surrounded by those nearest and dearest to her. 'Twas the perfection of happiness to owe this last, this priceless blessing, to Herbert, "and to Darby," she added.

Had not Herbert set his life at nought to serve and to save her, in her hour of danger; and was not Herbert now supporting her in her hour of weakness and exhaustion? Such were the thoughts of our gentle and generous Norah, as that same enchanted Herbert pressed her fondly to a manly heart, unalterably devoted to her.

Unmingled joy, too deep for utterance, now filled every heart, so lately torn with fear and anguish.

Suddenly a blazing torch, snatched from the replenished fire by Chouchow, waved wildly in

the cavern's mouth, lighting up for the instant that interesting happy group. It dropped, and all again was dark; but darkness had no terrors now.

All was peace, and joy, and gratitude, nor did the manly actors in this desperate drama of real life, now that their excited apprehensions had calmed down, yield less implicitly to the best and highest feelings of our nature than did the tender beings they had, by God's blessing, rescued from destruction.

In compliance with the happy mother's example, they knelt together in humble, heartfelt acknowledgment of divine protection and support, without which the wisdom and valour of man avail not. This sacred duty performed, Mrs. Darcie started to her feet as if suddenly stung by self-reproach.

"Chartres!" she exclaimed, in a voice tremulous with feeling, "where is our brave and generous friend? Tell me, I beseech you, that Chartres is safe!"

Chartres was still lying before the entrance of the cavern, amongst the wretches who had fallen by his hand, at that moment when, utterly regardless of life, he had so devotedly opposed with his unaided arm their violent inroads. He had owed the preservation of his life wholly to his having fallen as dead amongst the slain. His senses had been for some time slowly reviving, but he was still far from having recovered a distinct recollection of what had passed, still less did he comprehend the scene now around him.

The sudden flare of Chouchow's torch in his half-opened eyes had greatly contributed to rouse him from his stupor; but it was the agonized expression of that touching voice, calling so pathetically upon his name,—the voice so dear to his recollection, thrilling through every fibre of his heart, that restored him to himself. Thus revived, he raised his throbbing head, and spoke faintly; but Andrews, who chanced to be near, recognised his

well-known tones, flew to his assistance, and loudly announced to his anxious mistress that the object of her solicitude was found.

Mrs. Darcie hastened to raise her preserver.

"Come, Herbert," said Norah, "come and help us to thank and to assist our dear friend. Did you but know through what dangers and difficulties Mr. Chartres protected us, and how nobly he hazarded his life for us, you would feel for him as we do. But for him," she added impressively, "we should have been lost before even you could come to preserve us. He is worthy of your regard, Herbert."

Why Norah, the most natural and inartificial of fair maidens, should have deemed it necessary to account thus at length, and at such a time, for the warm interest she felt in the restoration of Chartres, or why she should be so anxious that Herbert should join with her in the expression of it, may probably be comprehensible to those more deeply skilled

in the human heart than we pretend to be. We simply record the fact.

Herbert meantime rather saw and felt than heard what Norah's wishes were, for the simple fact is, that the bewildered girl had twice, in that soft, sweet, irresistible voice of her's, addressed him as Herbert, a sound which rendered him deaf to all others, in his present state of excitement.

"Herbert! Herbert!" still rang sweetly in his ears, erasing every vestige of the uncomfortable feeling, amounting almost to envy, with which he had at first observed the deep interest she felt and openly expressed for Chartres.

Herbert, to whom he had only been slightly known as a gentlemanly, self-indulgent valetudinarian, was somewhat surprised to find him in the character of a hero of romance, but he lavished upon him most kind and judicious attentions, soon satisfying himself that Chartres had received no serious injury. Mr.

Waters, who had just arrived, bled him, a cordial was administered, and he was soon perfectly restored.

There was still, indeed, on his mind, some mystery hanging over the wonderful change that had taken place; but he saw the dear objects of his anxious care safe, unhurt, and surrounded by friends, able to protect them from all further violence or terror, and he was satisfied.

When Chouchow had so strangely and suddenly reconnoitred the interior of the cavern, with the flaming torch, which had first aroused Chartres, that eccentric youth had been prompted by no idle curiosity; but before the agitated spirits of the occupants of the cavern had become sufficiently calm to observe his proceedings, he had found means to remove the slaughtered pirates out of sight, and as far as circumstances permitted, every other object that could offend the eye. And this having been accomplished, he introduced

lights, scanty indeed, and in the rudest shape, but at least enabling them to see one another; and joyous were the mutual congratulations. Mrs. Darcie, still nervous and apprehensive, was, however, now struck with a new subject of alarm, for the first glance at Darby had startled her painfully, his face, neck, and clothes being splashed with blood.

"Fear nothing, dearest Madam," said Herbert, taking her hand gently and soothingly. "My brave young friend is unhurt. Those stains, the appearance of which so much alarms you, are the blood of the pirate chief, Cacafogo. Darby slew him; and, boy as he is, carries off the honours of the day."

Herbert, once more self-possessed, became every instant more deeply impressed with the necessity of removing the ladies as quickly as possible from the scene of so much suffering, and of so many conflicting emotions, before daylight should expose objects most repulsive,

with which they must then find themselves surrounded.

"I must remove you from this abominable place. I shall have no peace till I see you are safe on board the Petrel, where we can protect you and watch over you," he said, in a low voice to Norah. Then turning to Mrs. Darcie, he resumed—"I go," he said, "to see every thing prepared for you on board the Petrel, where Captain Daunton will, as you well know, be delighted to receive you. There, my dear madam, you will lay aside your cares and fears, and take, in peace and confidence, the repose you all so much need. Dear little Emma is asleep already. Within an hour I will return. Mr. Chartres and Darby will remain with you, and a strong guard of my men; though you may be well assured that I would not quit you if there was a possibility of danger."

Herbert hurried from the cavern. Poor fellow, he had been severely tried that night;

but he had curbed his impetuous feelings throughout the fray, and had attained to a degree of prudence, caution, and calm deliberation which had absolutely appeared unnatural and excessive to those about him. Little did they know what efforts it had cost him to abstain from rushing headlong upon the enemy, whose destruction to a man his calculated movements had completed with little loss on his own side.

But we are strange inconsistent beings; and it is more than probable that the painful self-control he had exercised through the whole affair, until the horrid shouts in the cavern had overthrown all his resolution, and led him to rush forward single-handed—it is more than probable, we say, that the self-control so sternly exercised in his contest with the pirates, whilst re-capturing the Thames, had not cost Herbert so painful an effort as that which now enabled him to tear himself from Norah's side, for one hour,

and that, too, to be wholly employed in serving her, whilst she remained in perfect safety.

Norah saw and understood his feelings; but whether she was pleased or displeased with this victory of reason and duty over inclination we cannot say, nor are we at all certain that she herself very well knew.

Herbert met Captain Timmins and Rushton, as he left the cavern, and the former turned back with him. It was soon arranged between them that one of the mates should proceed to the Thames, with part of the crew, to take charge of her and of the pirate schooner, that Mr. Anstey and his men might return to the Petrel."

"It is possible," said Herbert, "that the pirate Commodore may stand in to-morrow morning, to look for his comrade. Captain Daunton will make a point of being ready to chase him. He will be glad to see you to-morrow, Captain Timmins. He saw and

admired your defence of your ship; and whatever your plans may be, Captain Daunton will, I know, be desirous to assist you to the utmost of his power."

Andrews, Mrs. Darcie's servant, was sent to the wreck, to remove at once to the Petrel whatever could contribute to his mistress' accommodation in her new abode. The distance between the ships was short, and every dispatch was used. The boats both of the Thames and Petrel assisted, and within the hour Herbert once more entered the cavern.

All was ready. Captain Daunton awaited their arrival impatiently. He would have come to wait upon them, and to escort them, but that he felt it would be more agreeable to the ladies that he should remain on board. Chartres was persuaded to embark with them; Rushton preferred to return to the Thames.

The night was wearing fast away when the

weary party quitted the gloomy cavern, the scene of so much misery, and of such conflicting emotions,—never before trodden by human foot. What a variety of deeply agitating events had distinguished its first, and most probably its last, connexion with man! Yet would the memory of that wild and desolate place remain deeply impressed upon the minds of its temporary inhabitants.

Great pains had been taken to remove all unsightly objects from the immediate route of our friends, who must unavoidably pass the spot where the last of the pirates had fallen. A slight detour, aided by the shade of the trees, served to conceal the ghastly objects from their view; but as they were unconsciously passing close to them, a wild and haggard figure sprang up, and was in an instant seen at Norah's side; for the moon shone brightly.

Herbert's sabre started from its scabbard, and was already flashing in the moonlight;

but before the fatal blow could descend, the generous kind-hearted girl, who under his protection was far superior to all idle terrors, caught his uplifted arm.

"Hold, Herbert, hold!" she said. "There has been but too much of bloodshed."

The dark intruder flung himself at her feet, in a posture of abject submission.

The gentle pressure of her soft hand, the delight of hearing his name issue from her lips in a tone of affectionate confidence, sweetly blended with conscious power, so enchanted Herbert, that he could almost have blessed the wretch he would have slain. He was protected and pardoned.

Sweet are those innocent unconscious proofs of awakening affection; where love first shows itself in young hearts!

This was the last incident of that eventful night; and the fearful scene closed with an act of mercy, prompted by her whose gentle generous spirit could instantly forget its own

acute and protracted sufferings, and even under so startling an alarm, calmly exercise her conscious influence in favour of a ferocious but suppliant enemy.

CHAPTER II.

CAPTAIN DAUNTON, though not a polished man, was a gentleman. His reception of Mrs. Darcie and her family on board the Petrel, about four o'clock on that eventful morning, was kind, considerate, and quiet. He made no unmeaning professions, and abstained from all painful allusion to recent events; which must necessarily have been agitating to her. It was quite evident that he felt great pleasure in resigning to her his cabin, and all his own personal accommodations, though he had too much good taste to enlarge upon the subject;

and although he gave utterance to few words of condolence, or of congratulation, it was equally clear that he felt acutely for their sufferings, that he was highly gratified at having been instrumental in their rescue, and especially pleased to see them on board the Petrel.

It was indeed no time for talking. The mind, after long and severe trials, has acquired that tact for drawing accurate distinctions between professions and realities, which renders words unmeaning, actions eloquent.

"At least, my dear madam," said the Captain, speaking calmly and quietly, as he conducted his guests to his cabin, "we can offer you peace, quietude, and safety. Herbert and I will watch over you; and your own brave boy, who is much beloved here, shall be your aide-de-camp. Through him let your wishes be made known to me; and now, my dear madam," he added before he withdrew, "this is your own apartment. Your son will direct and superintend any alteration you may wish for

in its arrangments; I may safely trust you to his care, and your own servants are in attendance." He bowed and withdrew.

Mrs. Darcie saw her darlings once more in safety. All around her was peaceful and quiet, and she was guarded by generous and devoted friends. The change was too great, too sudden, to be calmly enjoyed; she could only kneel and weep; but she was aroused by Emma, who worn out with fatigue, and more than half asleep, suddenly exclaimed——

"Oh, mamma, mamma! there's my own dear little cot!" and the child sprang forward, and threw herself eagerly upon it.

The wearied mother, recalled to self-possession, raised her eyes, and could scarcely credit their testimony, when she beheld around her almost every thing connected with her own personal habits and comforts, arranged as conveniently, too, as if all their recent adventures and sufferings had been imaginary; and as if nothing extraordinary had taken place. She

raised her hand to her throbbing temples, as if collecting her thoughts, and labouring to comprehend how all this could be.

Norah was not less gratified. Her heart told her by what invisible agency this wonderful feat had been accomplished, in so short a time, amidst such scenes and difficulties. In fact, it was a change so unlooked for, that one who had not possessed Norah's secret clue to the truth might, like her mother, have been perplexed how to account for it.

She looked around in silent gratitude, her heart, lately so painfully agitated, was not insensible to the various proofs of devotion manifested in so many forms by her faithful lover. It was a pleasing subject, and soothing, for it cast a redeeming light upon the past, gave calm, hope, and enjoyment, to the present, and shadowed forth to her imaginative mind a flattering future.

Norah was constitutionally disposed to look at the bright side of things. She loved not

gloom nor gloomy thoughts; they were too much at variance with the lively joyous spirit which flashed forth from her bright eye, mantled in the ever-varying flush of her cheek, and charmed the listening ear, in her soft rich voice, a voice harmonising with her youth and beauty, speaking of all that is amiable and attractive.

But that sweet voice had ceased, for although when the fair Norah had rested her weary limbs upon her own, her wonted couch, full of grateful thoughts of him by whose care she felt it was provided, those same thoughts had banished all wish to sleep; yet the stillness, the calm repose around, a feeling of full security, now so new to her, brought such powerful aid to mental and bodily fatigue, that sleep, the most capricious and perverse of heathen deities, soon robbed her of her own sweet thoughts, though not perhaps without conceding some half-conscious misty shadows of them, if one might judge from the bright

happy smile upon her face. The fond mother looked alternately at her children, breathing so softly there, in peace and safety, then cast a hasty glance upon the well-known objects collected around. What had been her situation some few hours since? what was it now?

She prostrated herself in humble gratitude to God. Speak she could not, but her full heart poured forth its silent aspirations to the Throne of Grace. Words are but the vehicle of prayer, not its essence; and the outpourings of a pious, humble, and grateful heart, are not less acceptable for being silent. Mrs. Darcie arose more comforted than she had felt for many days and many fearful nights. Calm refreshing sleep then fell upon her; and the day was far advanced before she awoke to a joyful conviction of peace and safety.

Those same hours had been diligently employed by their energetic friends. The Petrel had withdrawn her officers and men from the

Thames, leaving both her and the prize to the charge of Captain Timmins, who was refitting the schooner to convey his crew and passengers back to the Cape in her, the Thames being a hopeless wreck.

Herbert, when he had first quitted the cavern, had sent Mrs. Darcie's servant Andrews, with Chouchow for an assistant, to remove all that might be useful to the ladies forthwith from the Thames to the Petrel, with whatever men or boats might be required to perform that service without a moment's loss of time; and the ships lying becalmed within a very short distance of each other, there had been no great difficulty in completing the arrangements which so much and so agreeably surprised the ladies. Herbert's sole merit lay in having so promptly conceived the scheme.

The Petrel, quiet as all had been on board her, had been made ready to weigh and to proceed immediately in pursuit of the pirate Commodore, had he appeared in the offing at

daylight; but as this was not the case, all were busily employed in removing everything that was valuable or useful from the wreck previous to burning her, lest the pirate, after the Petrel had sailed, should avail himself of the stores which it was impossible to take away.

Darby having at length been summoned to the cabin, found the whole party wonderfully refreshed, and proposed that breakfast should be served upon the deck, the after part of which had been carefully screened in before the sun arose, and ingeniously fitted up as a tent, which, by the help of a strong reinforcement of tables, chairs, and couches from the dismantled cabins of the wreck, wore a pleasing and commodious aspect. Warm greetings were interchanged with Daunton, Herbert, and Chartres, but allusion to all that had been unpleasant was carefully and scrupulously avoided.

The abundant stores which had been provided by Captain Timmins for his passengers

were removed to the Petrel and the schooner. Daunton rather winced under this arrangement, but it would have been cruel to condemn his fair friends to the coarse hard fare of an unusually protracted cruize, to which he could himself submit without repining.

Rushton and Captain Timmins came on board soon after breakfast. They had for the present taken up their abode in the wreck. Her accommodations had suffered little from the pirates, who had been so short a time in possession of her, and Daunton complimented the Captain of the Thames highly for his defence and retreat. The whole party joined heartily in this, and indeed it was justly due to him. The gentlemen then proceeded to business on the quarter-deck.

"I hope you will find sufficient room for your party in the schooner," said Daunton. "When will she be ready? for I must look after the pirate Commodore as soon as you are out of danger."

"We would gladly be ready to start with the land wind to-night, if it were possible, sir; but there is much to be done when one has to follow such a set of wretches as her last masters. Your artificers are helping us much."

It was clear that it would not be possible for the ladies to return to the Cape in such a vessel as the prize schooner, so roughly fitted up and so crowded as she would be. It was Timmins' opinion that there was little chance of their finding the Liffey at Joanna.

"She was a fast ship," he said, "and had no doubt been greatly in advance of him, and as the Fra Diavolo had not picked her up, she had doubtless passed on, not only in safety, but unconscious of danger."

"I do not see how Mrs. Darcie is to get to India," observed Daunton. "Are we likely to have any Indiamen proceeding by this passage? Is it not getting late for that?"

"Certainly. No regular Indiaman will go

this way," replied Captain Timmins. "But I think it probable that one or two more extra ships, like our own, may pass, as there were troops and stores yet to come to the Cape."

Herbert now joined them, to say that Manoel had recognised the pirate they had spared as one of the Secalavas, of whom he had previously known a little, that he had ascertained from him that the pirate Commodore had much fever and dysentery on board his filthy crowded craft; and that he must certainly have been in port before the Liffey could have been sufficiently advanced to have fallen into his hands.

There could now be little apprehension about her, and Captain Daunton undertook to convoy the schooner as far as Mozambique, where she would be in safety. This had become indispensable; for Manoel had heard it admitted by the pirates, when he had been a prisoner in the Fra Diavolo, that the

Commodore greatly outsailed her, and the Secalava prisoner confirmed this.

A consultation was held to determine what advice they should offer to Mrs. Darcie, and to consider how far they could hold out to her any hope of a chance of proceeding to India by remaining where she was. It was decided to recommend her to accept Captain Daunton's offer, and remain in the Petrel, as, though there was but a slender hope of falling in with an eligible ship bound to India, the Petrel must soon return to the Cape, which was the next best thing Mrs. Darcie could do.

All this was laid clearly before her; and, earnestly entreated by Captain Daunton to remain, as he would certainly return to the Cape after his cruize, she gratefully accepted his offer. The two Anglo-Indians were obliged to return to the Cape in the schooner, their leave of absence having expired. Chartres felt this unavoidable separation painfully; and the Darcies were by no means

indifferent to it, feeling the obligations they owed him.

"It is very fortunate, sir," observed Herbert to his Captain, "that there is just now a steady current setting to the southward along shore, nearly a mile an hour, which has relieved us from very unpleasant circumstances, unavoidably arising from the late affair."

"It's all very well to talk of currents," replied Daunton, "but I suspect the sharks have had quite as much to do with it, for they have all disappeared."

"Mr. Yarker, the second mate of the Thames, is a fine young fellow, and has asked me to speak to you, sir, about receiving him as a master's mate. He has a great wish to come into the service, and thinks he could bring four good seamen with him. We want an efficient mate very much. Grogson is now the only mate left, and I should be very glad to get rid of him."

"If Captain Timmins recommends Mr. Yarker, you may take him. I like what I have seen of him, but he must bring the seamen with him. We are getting short-handed."

Captain Timmins, who came on board to report that the schooner would certainly be ready by the following morning, gave Yarker a very high character. He then proposed that the Petrel should take as much of the remaining stores and provisions from the wreck as she could stow. He had himself loaded the schooner from the wreck, in justice to the underwriters, but there was still a large quantity of excellent provisions remaining, which he could not take, and which ought not to be burned in the old ship, and still less left for the pirates.

This was a proposal most acceptable to the Captain of the Petrel, who forthwith surveyed and condemned his own decayed provisions, replacing them from the wreck with others of

excellent quality. A great boon was thus conferred on his crew, supplying them permanently with a wholesome and nutritious diet, and was indeed almost the only personal advantage they derived from the capture of the pirate, unless we are to reckon as an advantage the refreshing break in a long cruise, which until lately had been monotonous enough.

The screened-in tent-cabin, in the after part of the Petrel's quarter-deck, was Mrs. Darcie's dining and reception room, or perhaps we should say the Captain's. Here Chartres spent his time almost wholly, for the cabin below Daunton had insisted upon resigning to the ladies. It was literally their withdrawing room; but their friends had always access to the tent-cabin (as it was called) on deck.

Chartres appeared to be both out of health and out of spirits. His late extraordinary exertions, and the tremendous excitement he

had undergone,—both so foreign to his usual habits of body and mind,—had been followed by a corresponding degree of lassitude. The thought of the approaching separation, too, was most painful to him. He scarcely spoke, and often appeared to be wholly unobservant of what was passing. His spirits became continually more and more depressed.

Yet he was the marked object of general respect and attention. Mrs. Darcie devoted much of her time and conversation to him; and so, indeed, did Norah, who fully appreciated both his merits and his services. She entertained a high regard for him, which she both expressed and manifested in her own ingenuous way, and thought and spoke of Chartres, in his absence, as the bravest and most generous of men. Whether there was or was not any mental reservation in favour of Herbert we know not; but we incline to the opinion that there was not.

We rather opine that our frank warm-

hearted favourite, who had a mind and spirit far superior to coquetry, had always considered Chartres in the same category with her father and his gallant friend Major Singleton; a thing to be admired, trusted, and, in a certain sense, loved. But it would quite as readily have occurred to her to have considered the first, as either of the other two, in the light of a lover,—a post which was, moreover, already occupied.

It was a curious practical inversion of Rushton's Anglo-Indian dogma, that whilst a man of fifty was young, a woman who had attained to her twentieth year was old—in fact, that female attractiveness seldom survived its eighteenth year — that Norah Darcie, more true to nature, had arrived at the conclusion, that a man thrice her own age could only look upon, and think of, her as a mere child.

Chartres, as an indolent valetudinarian, had been to a certain extent a disciple of the Rushton school; for of the existence of such a

school ludicrous proofs may be daily seen and heard. And very many clever men, besides Mr. Chartres, do, from mere indolence, adopt absurd, or even mischievous theories, when confidently promulgated even by persons of much inferior understanding to themselves; especially if they happen to have taken root amongst the set or caste to which they may chance to belong. But when Chartres' slumbering energies had been fairly roused, and important events had called forth his real character, such notions had been at once cast off with scorn.

It is distressing, but by no means uncommon, to see men like Chartres, whose bodily and mental frame is capable, under powerful excitement, of displaying indomitable zeal, energy, and generosity, combined with reckless bravery, rapidly reverting to habitual indolence and indifference, or even becoming hypochondriacal, when that excitement suddenly ceases. And this threatened to be the case

now with Chartres, to the great distress of all around him.

Herbert, who had conceived a high regard for Chartres, and felt the greatest gratitude to him for the protection he had so nobly afforded to his beloved Darcies—though he perhaps rather envied his gallant friend the glorious opportunity of which he had so honourably availed himself, did him full justice, and was now so far from being annoyed at Norah's overflowing gratitude, that he loved her the better for it. It was that simple truthfulness of character, so beautifully conspicuous in Norah Darcie, which with every passing hour bound him more indissolubly to her. Their mutual confidence, though little had been said, was never clouded by doubt or suspicion.

There was neither lack nor excess of attention on his part; so calm, so confiding, so natural, was their intercourse, that it attracted no particular notice, and awakened no unpleasant feeling even in Chartres. He was

not slow to acknowledge the merits of his new friend, for although difference of age, and still greater difference of habits and circumstances, had made such distinct men of them to all outward appearance, they had nevertheless come from the hand of nature with many important points of resemblance, and they perfectly appreciated each other.

Daunton was neither much accustomed to society, nor desirous to become so. His duties, his books, and his reflections, furnished him with sufficient occupation. He had no near relatives, and had been the architect of his own fortunes, such as they were. He was scrupulously attentive to his guests, nor could the most polished fine gentleman have behaved in a manner more pleasing or less obtrusive.

"I am distressed, Mr. Danvers," said Mrs. Darcie to the Surgeon of the Petrel, who had soon won her good opinion, "I am shocked to see Mr. Chartres relapsing into ill health and low spirits. It would be difficult for you who

see him as he now is, to imagine Mr. Chartres capable of the generous, I may say the heroic efforts he made to serve and to save us. I hope he consults you."

"My advice during the very short time Mr. Chartres will remain with us, would, I fear, dear madam, be of little service to him. His constitution never robust, has suffered in India. His indolent habits and his disposition to think about and to exaggerate his maladies, are injurious to him. At present he experiences a depression of spirits and a prostration of strength consequent upon his late extraordinary exertions. These will gradually subside. Change of climate and of scene, new and moderate excitements to action, can alone avail him permamently. I have ventured to suggest his return to England, but it would seem that there exist insuperable difficulties to that course."

Chartres meanwhile, listless and indifferent as he seemed to be, had abandoned himself

wholly to a dreamy admiration of his unconscious enslaver. The attentions which Norah so chèerfully and so gracefully paid to him were inexpressibly dear to him. But there was a something in the frank openness of her regard which, whilst it charmed him, grated upon his feelings. Her smile, though, was sunshine to his gloomy, agitated mind; her sweet voice, her gentle, silvery, guileless laugh, were chords of harmony that soothed his troubled spirit.

And all this must be lost! Another day would soon pass, and then they must part, too probably for ever. What would the world then be to him! His soul sank within him at the thought. And Norah, shocked to see him looking so pale, so wretched, exerted herself more and more to soothe and cheer him, with a gentle, affectionate earnestness that was but too well calculated to increase the disease.

"Oh, Norah, only think," exclaimed Emma, suddenly drawing aside the flag which covered

the entrance to the tent cabin, "Captain Timmins has brought me that sweet darling little green monkey that we used to be so fond of. There he sits chattering over a lump of sugar, winking those dear little round orange-coloured eyes, and making such faces! Do come and look at him; come, Mr. Chartres, do come and look at Jacko."

This was rather an awkward termination to a scene which had been fast tending to the pathetic, but spoiled children are seldom very observant of times and circumstances; and Emma, who was very fond of Chartres, and much petted by him, having seized his hand, as she urged him to come with her, he, who was in no mood for contesting anything, found himself a moment afterwards one of a young and merry group, who were admiring the tricks and grimaces of Mr. Jacko.

Herbert, chancing to come up, and finding his grave and listless friend in this strangely incongruous situation, still a prisoner to the

pet, proposed to Chartres that they should go together to the schooner, to look at the cabin which the artificers of the Petrel were preparing for him, as he had hitherto laboured in vain to induce Chartres either to give any direction himself, or even to take any interest in the subject. He was agreeably surprised by his immediate acquiescence; but he gained little by this, for all he could get from him, when on the spot, was a quiet approval of everything suggested by his active and intelligent friend; and even that seemed to require a painful effort.

All was now ready for the separation. Mrs. Darcie confided to Chartres a narrative of their adventures, addressed to her friend Mrs. Vaughan, which we would gladly have given in her own words, had we been able so to do. Chartres had therein his full share of grateful praise. Nor was Herbert forgotten. Indeed, either because he was a friend of Mrs. Vaughan, or for some other reason, his merits and his

services were dwelt upon with considerable warmth.

All that could be removed from the Thames having been secured, Captain Timmins himself, with tears in his eyes, applied the fatal torch, and everything on board the ill-fated wreck having been carefully arranged to secure that object, she was burned to the water's edge. Thus there was little of her left when they weighed in the evening with the land wind, and certainly nothing that could be useful to the pirates, to whom naval stores of any sort would have been a most valuable acquisition.

As the Petrel was to convoy the Fra Diavolo as far as Mozambique, where Captain Timmins wished to touch, Captain Daunton had an opportunity of writing to the Governor and to Mr. Brine, giving to both his plan of cruising, for the information of vessels bound through the Channel; and as this was not a final parting, all were glad to evade a formal leave-taking, but all felt thoughtful

and dejected. The Darcies were leaving friends who had stood by them nobly through a long series of dangers and difficulties; and especially the departure of Chartres was severely felt, as the state of his health and spirits was a source of serious uneasiness to them.

The weather continued fine, and the winds light, till they made the island of Mozambique, on the second day. The Fra Diavolo stood close in, and as soon as it was seen that a pilot boat had reached her, the Petrel bore up to the northward. The vessels had accidentally been separated to a distance which rendered personal communication difficult; and this was perhaps fortunate, for there could be no question of leave-taking. It was too dark for the schooner to enter the harbour that night; but there was in the tent cabin of the Petrel a degree of gloom and silence unusual to those who were met there. Of the schooner we only know that a tall, pale,

slender figure walked her deck till daylight appeared to disturb his meditations; sometimes walking fast, sometimes slow, in moody fits. He spoke to no one, appeared to observe no one; but ever as he turned in his short walk, he raised his head for a moment, and gazed intently towards the quarter in which the Petrel had last been visible, as if he had really expected to behold her there still.

CHAPTER III.

It is always a seriously unpleasant thing, in wild far-away seas, to part with a sole comrade; for those in the same ship with us have become so completely identified with ourselves that their presence does not by any means prevent a feeling of solitude.

And if this is always more or less the feeling upon such occasions, it is much more keenly felt when the crews of two ships, having shared the same difficulties and dangers, have imbibibed a strong mutual regard. It is then, indeed, that, though the acquaintance may

have been but recent, it is as the parting of dear friends.

The officers and crew of the Thames, and more especially their Anglo-Indian passengers, had won golden opinions from those who felt so much regret in parting with them. Chartres, indeed, was the hero of the adventures of the Thames, which had so nearly closed with a lamentable catastrophe, and his merits were appreciated by the crews of both ships.

"There was a good sailor spoiled," said Jack Oakum, as they were discussing Chartres' merits over their grog, in his berth, "when they rigged out that brave fellow in long togs."

Chartres was as frequently the subject of conversation in the cabin; and it was a high gratification to Mrs. Darcie to hear Captain Daunton and his officers so unanimous in their praises of him.

She had been by no means unobservant of

a thousand symptoms by which Chartres had unconsciously betrayed his unlucky attachment to Norah, especially during the last two days, when the approaching separation lay heavily upon him.

This was painful to her in the extreme, for she had always held that any great disparity of age, temperament, or habits were but too likely to prove fatal to domestic happiness, and the very little that Norah had seen of life had gone far to satisfy her of the justice of her mother's opinion, had she been inclined to doubt it, which she was not.

Norah, indeed, had never thought seriously about marriage; nor was she likely to do so, as it would separate her from the mother she so dearly loved, and in whom she confided with all the affectionate generous trustfulness of her natural disposition. Norah, therefore, was not in the slightest danger of questioning the opinion so strenuously impressed upon

her. Indeed it had never occurred to her that men thrice her age could be likely to think of her as a wife.

Mrs. Darcie feared that poor Chartres had indulged a passion which she knew to be hopeless; and was this the return to be made to him for all his generous care of them? It was a painful, perplexing subject of contemplation—and then they must meet again, too, in India; and the joy she would otherwise have felt at the prospect of that meeting was turned to sorrowful forebodings.

The following morning found the Petrel standing across the wide Mozambique Channel, but still steering well to the northward. There was nothing in sight.

Mrs. Darcie had, with her usual tact and consideration, ascertained from Darby at what hours Captain Daunton's table had been habitually served, that in this, as in all other matters of routine, when consulted, she might be able to suggest, as her own wish, the times

and seasons most conformable to the habits of a service so new to her. Their screened cabin on deck, or, as they continued to call it, the tent, was subject to occasional modifications now that the ship was under canvas, but not to an extent that interfered materially with their comfort, for the weather was fine and the winds generally light. The party, which included Herbert and Darby, met at breakfast with some cheerfulness, for Mrs. Darcie never permitted her own particular griefs to chill or to embarrass the friends around her, and the sight of her three children, all happy and safe, soon dispelled for the moment every vestige of uncomfortable feeling; whilst Daunton's unremitting kindness, with the respect and regard which her young people evidently felt for him, created a sort of home feeling which enabled her to overlook, for the time, the difficulties attached to the extraordinary situation into which she had been so strangely thrown, on board a

small brig-of-war, with no reasonable prospect of being able to pursue her voyage to India, where her husband, who would hear of their embarkation on the arrival of the Liffey, must be in a most painful state of anxiety about them. She, on her part, without any means of relieving his apprehensions, would probably, after remaining some weeks cruizing on board the Petrel, return with her to the Cape to recommence an undertaking which had this time so cruelly failed.

Norah thought little about all this. She shared her mother's anxieties chiefly from love for her; but her cheerful disposition and buoyant spirits found some points, even in the terrible past, upon which her thoughts could dwell with satisfaction, and with the present she had no quarrel. Daunton's attentions to her were truly paternal, and as her mother's countenance was gradually brightening, she much enjoyed her walks on the quarter-deck with Herbert. Darby was

constantly with her, and her guitar soon began to be heard, with short and broken snatches of song, but always in that light cheerful tone so congenial to her.

Emma had altogether forgotten her troubles. She was fond of Daunton, who petted her sadly. Darby was her delight, and she had made the acquaintance of his friend Mr. Tandy, who was extremely attentive, and moreover indefatigable in suggesting new sources of amusement for her; and if some of these had a slight dash of the Pickle in them, it was quite natural that it should be so, and not altogether disrelished by the young lady on that account. In short, Mr. Tandy, as Darby's friend, had made himself so agreeable to Emma that it really became a matter of doubt which was the reigning favourite, Tandy or Jacko; for as Norah told Herbert, in a serio-comic discussion of this important subject, Emma herself appeared to be undecided between them.

"She is certainly," said the lively girl, "more affectionate in her manner towards Jacko, but she treats Mr. Tandy with more deference and respect, especially since Darby's description of his friend's last adventures, and the ride he is said to have taken upon that monstrous lion, whose shaggy spoils you have so much reason to be proud of, and which terrified poor Emma so, that though she seems now to admire Tandy much, she appears to be half afraid of him."

"I suspect that Emma," replied Herbert, "soft and gentle as Tandy always is towards her, has had penetration enough to observe that he can be sharp and peremptory with others; or perhaps his physiognomy alone has told her this, for all intelligent children are skilful physiognomists."

"Ah! ha!" said his companion laughing. "I am to infer, then, that it is her intuitive skill in physiognomy that makes you so great a favourite with her. You are

growing vain, I fear. Good morning, Mr. Herbert."

And making a half bow, half curtsey, with a tone and manner full of espièglerie, she darted off, leaving poor Herbert as if suddenly awakened from some sweet vision to find himself annoyingly immersed in tedious routine duties.

"The ship's company have had their time to dinner, sir," said Tandy at Herbert's elbow, in a very respectful attitude, and with a grave face, but there was a lurking grin in his eye. Surely he could not have overheard the conversation in which he had been so flatteringly alluded to as the rival of Jacko!

Herbert, like a sensible fellow, dismissed the subject from his mind, and forthwith plunged into the vast variety of details which occupy so large a portion of a First Lieutenant's time and patience, perhaps in the hope that by double diligence now, he might earn leisure for a renewal of the late conference by-and-bye.

Thus all was peace and harmony on board the Petrel, for although everything was ready for a contest with the pirate Commodore, and a place of retreat for the ladies had been rendered as safe and as commodious as Herbert's ingenuity and Darby's zeal could make it, these things were never mentioned, and the ladies seeing the kind friends around them cheerful, and apparently intent only on hospitable thoughts and their own ordinary duties, which in a ship so well manned, so ably commanded, and now so long in commission, appeared to the uninitiated to proceed with mechanical regularity, requiring no great effort and but little superintendence on the part of the executive officers, and yet this state of things was, in reality, at once the consequence and the proof of judicious arrangements on the part of the Commander, and of unceasing vigilance on that of the First Lieutenant.

"I have made up my mind, Mr. Herbert," said the Captain, "to range backward and

forward across the Channel, on the supposed cruizing ground of the pirates, between the Table Cape and Queremba, a little longer."

"It is, I think, sir," replied Herbert, "our best chance, but I feel pretty certain that no more outward-bound Indiamen will pass this way. 'Tis too late in the season."

The Captain smiled, but said nothing.

"I am thinking," he resumed, after taking a turn or two in silence, "that we must endeavour to ascertain how the pirate is steering before he sees us, for we ought to see him first, and then, should night come on, we shall have a clue to his plans, and instead of losing him altogether in the dark, in consequence of his change of course, we may shape a course that will bring us close to him at daylight. I once captured a beautiful armed schooner in this way in the Bull-Dog, a regular old haystack, though the fellow sailed three feet to my two."

"We will try hard for it, sir. I am generally

at the mast-head myself, with a good glass, at daybreak."

"How does Mr. Yarker turn out, Herbert? I like what I have seen of him."

"He is a great acquisition, sir; for since we lost our other two oldsters, old Grogson has been wholly unequal to the duty, and indeed gets so bad, that I hope, sir, you will get rid of him on the first opportunity. He sets a very bad example in the ship, and is become altogether an unfit associate for the youngsters."

"It is very cruel to the persons themselves, as well as injurious to the service, to bring men upon the quarter-deck who are wholly unfit for it; and it is a painful duty to have to put such men out of the service. But it must be done I'm afraid."

Mrs. Darcie was now quietly established in her new home; and so completely reconciled to her situation, that, confining her cares and anxieties to her own breast, she resumed her wonted attention to the education of her

daughters. Emma once more began her usual course of lessons, under her mother and her sister, who herself also proceeded with a regular course of reading, suited to her age and station. Like her mother, she spoke French fluently, and read Italian well, though she had never had an opportunity of acquiring facility in speaking it. But music was her delight. Her natural talent had been assiduously cultivated; her voice was remarkably rich and sweet, and in the absence of other instruments, the guitar afforded her an accompaniment. This was her daily amusement. Absolute idleness was never permitted; the needle was not disdained; and although lessons were not so injudiciously pressed, as to make them irksome, Mrs. Darcie incited her daughters to constant occupation, both by precept and example.

A few days after the Fra Diavolo had left them, a little before the usual time for taking holiday, Darby entered the cabin suddenly,

for to tell the truth, Emma had coaxed him into a promise that he would do so, if there should be a fresh cool breeze on deck.

"There is a beautiful breeze, my dear mother," he said, "and a walk on deck will refresh you and the girls. We must take advantage of such opportunities, for they seldom last long."

The books were laid aside, and the whole party proceeded to the deck, where their arrival was hailed with great pleasure by the officers.

The wind continued to freshen, and as it was directly opposed to a strong current, the ship was forcing her way rapidly against a short crested sea, till, after a time, she began to rise and to fall, and to buffet the waves angrily; whilst she heeled over so much, that Norah found the support of Herbert's arm extremely convenient. Yet the air was soft, and the sky cloudless, though of a lighter blue than the waters. And as the little Petrel

plunged through the puny waves, a line of white foam passing swiftly aft on both sides, united under the ship's stern at some distance, forming a bright white line in her wake, the arrow-like straightness of which Herbert pointed out with pride to his fair companion, as a proof of the accuracy with which the ship was steered; "just," he said, "as a straight furrow proves the ploughman's skill."

"Exactly," said the saucy girl. "I now see why they talk of a ship ploughing the deep, a phrase to which, hitherto, I had found it impossible to attach any very precise idea."

But as his laughing companion's jocular remarks upon his somewhat grave exposition evidently proceeded from no wish to depreciate his Petrel, or her performance, or even the helmsman's proficiency, but simply from an exuberance of spirits, which at least showed that she was happy in her present position, he was delighted with it, as he would probably have

been with anything that Norah might then and there have uttered, were it even less to the purpose. Indeed, the refreshing breeze combined with all around to put them into high good humour with themselves and with everybody else; but still the wind increased, and they walked forward on the deck to watch the battle between the advancing ship and the resisting waves, now raging with considerable violence, in exact proportion to the increased force of the wind.

The spray thrown up by the ship's prow now formed a curve at right angles with her hull, and was projected several yards from her bows, before it fell into the sea, sending a shower on to the deck like light drizzling rain. The sun, which was now some hours below meridian, was nearly astern of the ship, and Herbert chose this moment for directing Norah's attention to the spray, as he well knew what must follow.

"Look!" replied Norah, with evident sur-

prise, "what lovely tints are glancing upon that watery arch!"

Herbert watched with delight the changes of her expressive face as it lighted up with admiration at this phenomenon, whilst its colouring became gradually more clearly defined, until a perfect miniature rainbow appeared, fixed, as it were, to the ship's bow, and advancing with her.

"Look!" she continued. "One might fancy it some beneficent fairy gliding along with us, to protect our gallant ship from mishap."

"It is not often," answered Herbert, "that such interesting mariners as you are present to procure us celestial aid. This must be your good genius, and we will draw happy auguries from her presence."

"You may laugh at my ignorance and inexperience," said Norah, "but they have their advantages; for you, who are familiar with such scenes, can scarce conceive how intensely

beautiful this has appeared to me. Indeed, I shall never forget it."

"Nor I," said Herbert, in a low voice; "for though often seen before, and, indeed, anticipated now, I have enjoyed it at least as much as you have, and it is fixed in my memory for ever."

"Where is it gone to?" asked Emma rather impatiently. "Just as I had come up to look at it, it is gone. Can't you bring it back again, Mr. Herbert? And there's Darby and Tandy walking the other side of the deck," she continued rather poutingly, "laughing at us for admiring it, instead of calling me up sooner to see it."

"My dear," said Norah, "these sailors see so many wonderful and beautiful objects fresh from the hand of nature, that they admire nothing, unless it be their ship."

"Not guilty, 'pon honour," said Herbert, in a tone which, though she did not look up, brought the colour into his companion's cheeks.

The sudden failure of the breeze had caused Emma's disappointment. It continued to die away till it fell calm. The heat became oppressive, and the ladies retired to the tent, as they persisted in calling the deck-cabin.

On returning to the quarter-deck some two hours later, Herbert heard the guitar in the cabin below, and thought he could distinguish in the words of the fair songstress some allusion to the late occurrence, in broken portions of a half-composed romance, apparently expressive of her admiration of the little attendant rainbow.

"You are listening to Norah's guitar," said the pet, who, advancing with noiseless step, had seized Herbert's hand.

"Yes, dear," he replied; "and, if I am not mistaken, the little rainbow is the subject of the ditty."

"To be sure it is; she has been thrumming at it this hour past, till I was quite tired of hearing it. Don't you know, Herbert, that

when anything strikes Norah she is sure to sing about it? You would soon be as tired of it as I am."

Herbert had his doubts whether this was quite correct; but he learned enough from his prattling companion to encourage his hopes that he might, with her co-operation, have an opportunity of hearing more upon this subject, in which he began to take great interest; for Emma was very fond of Herbert, and was his faithful ally.

There was a light cool breeze again in the evening, when Captain Daunton's party assembled in the deck-cabin; and the Petrel being on a wind, with her courses hauled up, the fresh air passed most enjoyably through the ship.

"We were enchanted, Captain Daunton," said Mrs. Darcie, "with that little scene to-day, which, familiar as it may be to you, both astonished and delighted us."

"We had at least the pleasure of seeing you

gratified," replied the Captain; "but the admiration so prettily expressed by my young friend here has infected us all. As for Herbert, one might have sworn he had never seen such a thing before."

"Certainly," said Herbert. "Often as I have seen it, I never had any very clear conception of its beauties till to-day, and I was not surprised to find it had made so deep an impression upon Miss Darcie's imagination. Indeed, if I mistake not, I had the good fortune to hear her warbling more than one stanza upon the subject."

"My dear young friend," said the Captain, eagerly, "as Herbert has thus been favoured by fortune, may I not hope that you will indulge me also?"

"It is a practice with me, Captain Daunton," replied Norah, "as it is with all in the native land of the guitar, to adapt rude verses, referring to any interesting or amusing occurrence of the moment, to some

simple air, and as you have made me feel myself so perfectly at home, I have naturally and almost unconsciously indulged in my old habit of doing thus: but I fear my rude ditty will scarcely amuse you."

Mrs. Darcie having expressed a wish that the Captain should be indulged with the song, Emma, who had been acting under instructions from Herbert, advanced, and placed the guitar in her sister's hands, looking up to Herbert for approbation.

"I see," said her sister; "a regular plot, I see it all,—I must therefore submit; but I claim your indulgence, Captain Daunton, for although I do profess to be, to a certain extent, a musician, I have not the slightest pretension to be a poet, or even a tolerable improvisatrice. My doggrel, supported by music, may be tolerated by friendly ears, though only intended for my own; but heaven forbid that I should ever see it written."

Emma had, as usual, placed herself close to Herbert, to whom she was whispering—

"The intelligent child," said Norah, in pretended displeasure, "has done your bidding, and now, I suppose, claims her reward."

All were hushed in expectation of a rich treat, and it was clear that Norah's song, whatever it might prove to be, had no very severely critical ordeal to pass through. After a short and playful prelude, she commenced :—

NORAH'S SONG.

"Our gallant bark see, as if instinct with life,
With wild wind and waves, how she joys in the strife;
At each bound she dashes those dark waves aside,
As fiercely she champs them to foam in her pride—
Like some noble war-steed mid hostile array,
Whose bold charge is spreading alarm and dismay.

"That light drizzling spray, how it flies from her prow,
And gay tints assuming, soon forms the bright bow,
The rainbow, which follows nought earthly beside,
Wings its way with our bark o'er the blustering tide.
Bright spirit of ocean, so lovely in form,
Oh, bear our bark scatheless through battle and storm!"

Then ceasing for a moment, she looked archly at Captain Daunton, and addressing herself pointedly to her kind old friend, she resumed—

"From Ogre and Demon poor maidens to save
Was ever the pride of the noble and brave;
One caitiff lies crushed now, his victims are free,
May a blessing still rest on your path o'er the sea.
Dark spoilers pursuing on Afric's wild shore,
And noble deeds daring, like heroes of yore."

The songstress ceased. Poor Herbert was enchanted, the sweet sounds lingered on his ear, and floated around him, long after the magic instrument had been laid aside, but he could not give utterance to his excited feelings. Daunton, on the contrary, expressed his acknowledgments warmly, and spoke freely of the pleasure with which he had listened to the performance. Herbert's feelings were not the less clearly displayed, nor less warmly appreciated, because he was tongue-tied.

The little party broke up, and when the

fascinated lover, whilst conducting his mistress to the cabin below, seized an opportunity to press the fair hand he held to his lips, without reproof: he trod on air, the proudest, the happiest of men.

Long did he that night pace the deck in solitude and silence to calm and compose his mind. And well was his light elastic step, now fast, now slow, as his thoughts varied, recognized by Norah. Nor could words have more clearly interpreted his feelings!

CHAPTER IV.

THE hours on board the Petrel passed swiftly and pleasantly, and for that very reason there was little to record. It was the calm after the storm. Painful recollections gave additional value to a state of quietude, which, but for them, would have appeared dull and monotonous.

The ship continued to stand across the wide channel during the day, sometimes approaching the Madagascar shore, sometimes the African coast, still gradually advancing in a zigzag course towards the Island of Johanna, with

the usual alternation of calms and fresh breezes.

Sometimes the young middies chased each other up and down the rigging, competing with one another in feats of strength and agility, in which they all greatly excelled, in consequence of the strength of arm derived from the frequency of such practice, for where there was not space for a free use of the legs, exercise of some other sort must be had for healthy active boys. This was now more than ever practised to amuse Emma, who took great delight in it; and to say the truth, longed exceedingly to be one of the party, but that could not well be.

Tandy, as Chouchow had impertinently observed, when that gallant youth had been dangling at the end of a small cord, over a terrific precipice, was not much heavier than their old tom-cat, and quite as active, and in virtue of these qualifications he took a decided lead upon these occasions. Emma was an

admiring spectator of his extraordinary boldness and agility, and he was not a little proud of her approbation. But the young lady, who was endued with a small, a very small portion of a congenial spirit, contrived to excite a feeling of emulation, or at least of imitation in Jacko, who was very fond of her, and jealous withal, especially of the young Mids, who were great favourites with him too, though they did plague him sadly at times. No sooner did Jacko enter into the spirit of the thing, than Tandy was forthwith outdared, and outdone, very much to his annoyance, but to the great amusement of Emma, who, observing symptoms of rising wrath, told Tandy that he must not be angry with poor Jacko, who had practised gymnastics from the cradle.

Tandy bit his lip, but it was beneath his dignity to quarrel with a monkey: it would subject him to ridicule from Emma, and poor Jacko was never inclined to quarrel with any one. The only thing to which he had ever

shown any antipathy was the old tom-cat to which Tandy had been so disrespectfully compared by Chouchow.

Cats love to sleep in the sun, and Tom, who like all tame animals on ship-board, was a licensed favourite, was lying one day, as was his custom o' th' afternoon, stretched out at full length upon the deck basking in the hot sunshine.

"Now, Miss Emma," said Tandy, "come here, and I'll show you some fun."

This was a summons the young lady was always prompt to obey. Tandy had Jacko in his arms, and having secured Emma's attention, he turned round and pointed out to Jacko his sleeping enemy. The sight of the cat always excited Jacko's wrath, though generally so gentle and quiet. His weazened old face immediately puckered up, whilst spite and malice glanced from his eyes. He sprang upon the deck, and capered gently round old Tom, with great caution and quite noiselessly,

till he had satisfied himself that he was really fast asleep. He then looked up to Emma, to whom he always professed devoted allegiance, flying to her for protection when in danger or disgrace. Then placing himself immediately behind the cat, he cast one rapid glance upward to mark a place of refuge beyond the reach of Grimalkin's wrath, and collecting all his energies for the grand coup, he seized poor Tom's tail with both his little black hands, and tugged at it with his utmost strength. When the startled cat sprang up to repel the unprovoked outrage, Jacko, quick as lightning in his movements, gave Tom such a slap on his full round face, that fully roused, he turned fiercely round to pounce upon him. But Jacko had evidently calculated upon this, for at one bound, he was perched upon the main-boom, out of all danger, and from thence he continued to chatter and make hideous grimaces at his disappointed enemy in a tumult of triumph, looking every instant to Emma for

applause. Whilst our Middies, who had all enjoyed the sport exceedingly, only spoke with bated breath, and kept themselves scrupulously abaft the mainmast, beyond the absolutely immaculate portion of the quarter-deck, with the mysterious restrictions and ceremonies of which they did not dare to trifle, Emma, who was controlled by no such awe, ran and even jumped about, shouted to Tandy, and scolded Jacko, so utterly regardless of the hallowed ground on which she so unconsciously trod, that the old quarter-master, standing up to con the ship, raised his bushy eye-brows in astonishment. He spoke not, but his face said as plainly as a hard weather-beaten honest old face could say, "What next, young lady? you'll have the Captain coming up!"

He then looked at the officer of the watch, half inclined to believe that starched official, usually so tenacious of quarter-deck decorum, must have become all at once deaf and blind. It is quite clear that the old quarter-master

must have been a genuine descendant of Tom Pipes, and like him, a bachelor. Little did he know how female influence breaks through rules and regulations, bending to its own sovereign will the harshest laws, as well as the most despotic rulers; often indeed more easily, and always more completely than men of more mild and generous nature. This is no idle fancy; for we have seen it often. And well do we recollect a case in point, which in our youth astonished us greatly, and gave us a lesson for life.

It was once our hap to serve in a large ship, with a Commander renowned in his days for capricious severity, and the unrestrained indulgence of a most violent temper. The coarseness of his language to his men, and to such of his officers as he was quite sure would submit to it, was the more offensive, that it was thickly larded with oaths and execrations. He was one of those who made it a principle never to be satisfied with any body or any

thing in his own ship, and if that had been his only failing, he would have had many to keep him in countenance, for many an ignorant and stupid commander has gained the reputation of being a good officer, solely by acting upon this heartless and unofficer-like principle. But our Commander carried the point beyond all bounds, and in despite of his severity, was always acknowledged to be a very bad officer, for he had contrived to be equally unpopular with all classes, and especially so with his own brother officers. It would be difficult to describe the general joy when it was suddenly announced that the —— was to be paid off forthwith.

It had often occurred to our inexperienced mind, to pity the wife and family of our sullen, harsh, and unfeeling Commander, and this thought now arose with increased force.

"Lord help the poor lady," said we to ourselves, "now that this man will have no one

else, over whom he will be able to tyrannise."

There was all at once about our amiable Commander a sort of grim unnatural civility, which, however, did not at all improve him. The effort it cost him was too obvious. In his personal habits he was extremely methodical, which was the more singular, because in the exercise of his official duties, he was utterly without method, influenced almost wholly by the temper and caprice of the moment; so that with a great amount of harshness and severity, the —— was a very ill-disciplined ship.

One of his habits was to have a large silver snuff-box placed upon the table before him, as soon as dinner had been removed, and a coloured silk handkerchief was also laid upon his knee; and this was the especial duty of his old servant Jones, who in many respects exercised a very mysterious influence over him; and was not only extremely impertinent to his

master, but did also continually violate the articles of war, by appearing in a state of intoxication.

The Commander, amongst other new-born civilities, gave frequent dinner parties, which were as dull and disagreeable as a strong mutual feeling of ill-will between host and guests could make them. Upon one of these occasions, we had got through the dinner pretty smoothly, and the dessert was about to be placed on the table, the only unpleasant circumstance having been, that old Jones, who was rather more tipsy than usual, had been guilty of sundry clatterings of plates and dishes, mixed up with not a few collisions of decanters, at each of which the irritated chief looked daggers, but said nothing, though upon such occasions, and they were by no means unfrequent, he had generally been wont to bestow a few bitter curses upon the offender; but he was now evidently bent upon playing l'aimable. We could see that the storm thus denied its

natural vent, was working internally with no little violence, for a pale livid blue was gradually stealing over the Commander's countenance, which was naturally extremely sallow, and rather blotchy withal. We knew the symptoms well; yet, even when the staggering steward, had lumped the decanters upon the table close before him, with a force calculated to try their strength and his master's weakness, no explosion took place. The old steward then, with a smirk of self-satisfaction, which marked distinctly that he thought himself remarkably sober, succeeded in laying the snuff-box on the table somewhat more gently, and staggered out of the cabin.

In an instant the Captain rose from his chair and pulled the bell violently. He was now choking with rage, and his face was becoming every instant darker. Jones came in and stood before his angry master, quite unabashed, almost disrespectfully so.

"Villain! scoundrel!" exclaimed our host,

trembling with passion; "where's my silk handkerchief, you rascal? How dare you bring the snuff-box without the silk handkerchief, you villain?"

And then, the torrent having overpowered all restraint, discharged its pent-up fury in a a storm of oaths, imprecations, and gross abuse, which would have been irresistibly ludicrous if it had not shocked our feelings; for there were two extraordinary circumstances about it, which strongly marked the irrationality of violent anger; first, that the ostensible cause of all this outbreak was the extremely trivial offence of having neglected to place a silk handkerchief in a certain place, at an appointed time; the second, that although the said culprit was unquestionably very drunk, which would have been an unpardonable offence in a butler in a private house, but which on board Her Majesty's ship —— at sea, and in face of an enemy's squadron, was a crime of great magnitude; and of a most pernicious example

when thus committed with impunity in the Captain's presence—yet no allusion was made to this, which was poor old Jones's only real crime; and as during the whole vehement attack upon him, he was accused of almost everything else, it was altogether incomprehensible.

"Lord help that poor dear woman his wife," said we internally, in the innocence of our young and inexperienced heart.

Old Jones stood before his enraged master with great composure, balancing himself as well as he could; for there can be little doubt that, short as the interval had been between his quitting the cabin and his returning to it, he had found time to swallow another glass of grog, and his bald, shining, old head, continued nodding mechanically like the china images of a Mandarin. Thus he stood as one accustomed to face such tempests, till his master having completely exhausted himself, sunk back in his chair black in the face, and panting for breath.

"Go on," said old Jones tauntingly, when he saw that the doughty Commander could not utter another word; "go on," he repeated, raising his forefinger like one about to lay down the law authoritatively; "'tis all very well to make the most of it." Then, pointing to the table with his finger, the tremulous motion of which gave greater effect to what he said, he reached forward and touched the snuff-box. "Make the most of it," he said once more, looking at his panting master; "the ship will be paid off in a few days, and then," he added, spitefully, "you dare not take a pinch for the life of you."

And thus having, to our horror and astonishment, bearded the tiger in his den, and laid open to profane ears, the sacred mystery of the tyrant's domicile, he once more staggered out of the cabin with the triumphant and self-satisfied air of a drunken man, who has succeeded in persuading himself that he at least is remarkably sober, whatever those around him may be.

The whole affair was so extraordinary, the actors therein, time, place, and circumstance considered, formed so singular a scene, and the result was so ineffably ridiculous, that without daring to trust ourselves with a single glance at the burly countenance of the discomfited potentate, from whose asinine reality the bear's skin had been so rudely torn off, we rushed out unceremoniously, and hastened to the privacy of our own little cabin, to give full scope to the laughter we could no longer restrain, and which it would have been highly indecorous to have indulged in more publicly.

This it was which first opened our young eyes to the fact, long since amply confirmed, that a bullying, domineering tyrant, though often a cruel husband to an amiable and submissive wife, subsides readily into the most obsequious of hen-pecked husbands, in the hands of a high-spirited and self-willed woman.

But, indeed, quarter-deck etiquette itself, though so stern and unbending to man, that a highly distinguished Governor-General, on his passage to India, is known to have been publicly reproved for a slight violation of it, has never yet presumed to resist the will and pleasure of woman. So submissive is it known to be to petticoat government, that it has been deemed necessary to forbid any married Captain of a man-of-war, taking his liege lady to sea with him ; a regulation still in force.

Emma, child as she was, seems to have felt instinctively that she was in a region ever ready to acknowledge female supremacy, and was, besides, led on by those mischievous Middies, for whom we are bound to confess a predilection approaching to weakness: but all this has led us far from our story, to which we must now return.

The appearance of Captain Daunton upon the deck put a sudden stop to these gambols. Her playfellows dispersed, save him of the

watch, who began forthwith to pace up and down the leeside of the deck, with great gravity of demeanour, affecting to be intensely occupied with his important duties, and looking as if he had never heard of a joke. It was Somers, who was by no means so much in Emma's good graces as the others. She had an instinctive dislike to two faces under one hood, and saw that he was overacting a part. She therefore flew to the Captain, seized his hand, and began to prattle to him; but she had all her eyes about her, and soon after observed some mysterious intimation conveyed by the messenger boy to Mr. Somers, accompanied by a touch of the boy's cap, to which the young officer replied very superciliously, and in as loud and authoritative a tone as a thin wiry voice could accomplish, said,

"Hold the reel."

Emma was now all attention.

The messenger boy brought forth a light

wooden reel, coiled upon which was a considerable length of well-stretched whipcord. Emma became so much interested in this proceeding that she dropped the Captain's hand, and watched every movement of all parties, to the great delight of Somers, who, being considerably behindhand in gymnastics, felt that he was now showing off to great advantage.

The old Quarter-master approached the binnacle, and drew forth a small glass, in the form of a common hour-glass, and held it up to collect all the sand at one end of it, ready for use. Somers cast a sharp glance that way, and called out pettishly,—

"What are you after? Not that glass, I tell you! the short glass!"

The Quarter-master, without making any reply, replaced the glass, and took out one very much smaller, though he looked as if the change was in his judgment an error. But Mr. Somers, who knew and cared very little

about that, had only thought of setting the old seaman right before Emma, to his own honour and glory, well knowing that, right or wrong, he would be obeyed without remonstrance.

Having fixed the log to his satisfaction, he stood up on one of the guns, and gathering a certain portion of the line in his hand, he cried with great dignity,

"Ready."

The Quarter-master, with the little glass held horizontally in his hand, replied, "R-a-ady."

Somers then threw the log, with the portion of line in his hand, over the ship's quarter. The log, from its construction, assumed an erect position in the water, offering the resistance of its whole flat surface to the log-line, acting horizontally upon it; the line, therefore, was drawn off the reel, in proportion to the ship's progress through the water, almost as much so, indeed, as if the log in the water had really been a fixed point; then, allowing an

established quantity of line to run out, which gives more stability to the operation, Somers was again heard in a very authoritative tone—

"Turn!" he cried.

"Turn," repeated the Quarter-master, as he turned up the little glass in his hand, whilst Emma watched the flow of the sand as if she would fain have counted its particles.

"Stop," quoth the Quarter-master.

"Stop," repeated Mr. Somers, as he gave the line a severe check, to withdraw a certain peg in the log, by which means the little log, thrown upon its flat surface, no longer offered any resistance. He then threw the line to the messenger-boy, with precisely that air of ineffable conceit, and condescending dignity, with which, whilst crack coaches existed, a dandy coachee was wont to throw his unbuckled reins to John the horse-keeper; and with the self-same object of charming the young ladies, and showing what a great man he was.

Emma had looked at all this with delighted wonderment, and then, once more seizing the Captain's offered hand, asked him so many shrewd and pertinent questions, relative to all she had seen, which she was of course very far from having clearly understood, that the warm-hearted old Quarter-master, who heard it, was quite won, and would as soon have thought of lecturing the Captain himself as of questioning the propriety of anything that Emma might thenceforth take a fancy to say or to do,—even on the quarter-deck itself.

But there was something about the exhibition of science and pomposity by Mr. Somers which appeared to ruffle the Captain not a little.

"What is the ship going, Mr. Somers?" he asked, rather drily, looking over the side, as if to form his own opinion on the subject.

"Two knots and a half, sir," replied the youngster, with a strikingly self-satisfied air.

"Two knots and a half, sir!" retorted the

Captain, with some severity; "and pray, sir, who taught you to heave the log with the short glass when the ship was going two and a half? Pray, Mr. Herbert," he resumed, addressing the First-Lieutenant, as that officer was coming up the hatchway, "who has taught this young gentleman to heave the log with the short glass in a calm?"

Poor Mr. Somers, thus assailed upon the delicate points of stupidity and professional ignorance, at the very moment in which he was flattering himself that he had won Emma's admiration, sneaked off in bitter mortification; for though the young lady by no means comprehended the nature or the degree of his failure, she had clearly observed the very sarcastic and severe tone of the Captain's comments—a tone so unusual with him. The delinquent, who knew that Emma's curiosity, having been once roused by the Captain's contemptuous manner towards him, would not rest till it was fully gratified, had too much

reason to apprehend that either Darby or Tandy would be called upon to explain the matter to her, and that they, especially the latter, would make the most of such an opportunity to depreciate him—for he was well aware that he did not stand very high in the estimation of his brother Mids.

Every region, however extended, however contracted, has its follies and its vanities, and everywhere these inevitably lead to vexation and mortification. Woe to those who seek consolation where it is not to be found!

Somers, as soon as his watch was ended, sought his old and congenial confidant Grogson, into whose maudlin ear he poured the sad tale of the Captain's unjust severity, Herbert's gross partiality, the presumption of his young messmates, and all his other grievances, concluding with the alleged impertinence of the ignorant upstart Yarker, who, he was certain, thought himself a better sailor than Grogson himself. This was a cunning appeal to old

Grogson's weak side; who forthwith commenced his jeremiad, recommending both by precept and example his case bottle of rum, as the only source of comfort for oppressed merit. Nor did he find a reluctant listener.

Another day had passed away, and nothing could be seen of the pirate Commodore; quarters had been inspected, the sails exercised, the operations of the day had ceased, and the hammocks had been piped down. This was the social hour; for the sun was rapidly approaching the horizon, whilst a breeze, which carried the Petrel between four and five knots an hour, under easy sail, was, after a very hot day, extremely grateful and exhilarating.

"If this breeze continues, Mrs. Darcie," said Herbert, as he joined the party in the deck cabin, "we shall have a delightful walk this evening. These cool breezes, at a distance from the land, are charming."

Herbert's eyes had instinctively wandered

towards Norah whilst he was speaking, for her presence had most certainly been the main element of the pleasure he was anticipating in his evening walk.

One side of the canvas screen had been withdrawn to admit the breeze—so that ingress and egress were free and frequent.

"Do you know, Mamma," said Emma, entering, somewhat out of breath, "that there's a quantity of such beautiful fish swimming about the ship, and Darby has just killed such a large one. They say he is a great hand at it."

"But where are all these wonders, Emma?" said Mrs. Darcie.

"Somewhere at the other end of the ship, where they won't let me go," said the child, rather poutingly. Then turning round, "Dear, dear Mr. Herbert!" she said coaxingly, "do take me to see it all."

Herbert shook his head good-humouredly, whilst he assured her it was impossible; and

as Norah began to tune her guitar, her sister, young as she was, had quite wit enough to perceive that she had no chance of attention.

"What am I to sing, Mamma?" asked the fair musician.

Herbert looked entreatingly at Mrs. Darcie.

"You did some little violence to your inclinations last evening, love, to please us," replied Mamma; "this time you must please yourself."

Herbert, seeing no hope of support from that quarter, still slightly insinuated his hopes of a repetition of the last song; but Norah shook her ringlets, and laughed, tuning her guitar the while, and occasionally humming the commencement of some old ditty, in the exuberance of her spirits holding him in playful suspense. The arch expression of the lovely girl's countenance, as she made this promising commencement, cast a spell over her little audience, and every face, whatever its natural character, wore for the moment the livery

of pleasure, imposed by her irresistible influence.

But, alas, for human joys, even when pure and innocent;—a sudden cry arose, too frequent at sea, and always most distressing.

"A man overboard! A man overboard!!"

Commencing indistinctly at the foremost end of the ship, it spread aft, with terrible distinctness. Herbert sprang up at one bound upon the quarter-deck hammock-netting.

"Hard a-port; cut away the life-buoy, Mr. Tandy,—Down, hard down, with the helm! Let fly the head-sheets,—Square the main-yard,—Clear away the boats," burst rapidly, but distinctly, from his lips, as he gazed intently upon some passing object on the water; for it was now nearly dark. The ladies were hastily conveyed from amidst the bustle to the cabin below, in a painful state of anxiety and alarm.

Mrs. Darcie, who had seen her daughter descend the ladder before her, terrified as she

was, could not resist the temptation to take one hasty glance, as she turned round to follow them, under the escort of Danvers.

"My God," she uttered faintly with an agonizing shudder, "have mercy upon us!" her voice gradually sinking, as if horrified at something she had imperfectly seen (for it was nearly dark); and not daring to give expression to her feelings, or even to ask a question, lest she should awaken in the minds of her girls suspicions, which had inflicted such unutterable anguish upon herself.

CHAPTER V.

HURRIED down into the cabin in this agitated state, the ladies heard coils of rope thrown heavily upon the deck, over their heads, the creaking of blocks as the boats were lowered into the water, and a variety of discordant noises, which perplexed and distressed them the more from being incomprehensible. Nor were the first exclamations of officers or men more intelligible.

"Bear off,—Lower away forward,—Hold on abaft,—Let go of all," were orders little cal-

culated to relieve their anxiety. At length Daunton's voice was heard.

"Boats there!" he said, "Spread half a cable's length apart,—Row up a-beam of the ship,—Let the bowman keep a sharp look-out; if you get sight of the life-buoy, you will be very near them then. Lay on your oars: watch and listen."

The boats started as directed, each as it was ready, not losing a moment.

"Main-yard there," said the Captain; "Do you see anything of them now? Do you see the life-buoy?"

"We saw the life-buoy a minute since, sir, on the weather-beam, but we have lost it now," replied Mr. Tandy, who being particularly sharp-sighted, had been called out of the boat, and sent to look out aloft, and, if possible, to keep sight of the object. "When we saw them last, they appeared not to be far from the buoy," he added; "but we saw them very indistinctly. The boats are in the right direction."

This question and reply had been listened to with painful interest in the cabin.

"*Them!*" repeated Mrs. Darcie unconsciously, no longer able to control her fears; "Them!" she said; "then my eyes did not deceive me."

Norah, though deeply distressed at the idea of a fellow-creature perishing thus suddenly before their faces, had not hitherto entertained the slightest suspicion of the terrible truth; but Mrs. Darcie's unguarded exclamation struck her to the heart. She threw herself into her mother's arms.

"You saw it! you saw it!" she said in broken accents, mingled with bitter sobs. "I missed his voice. Oh, mother! mother! Darby is lost, and he, too, in trying to save him. Would to Heaven that I——"

But wholly overpowered by the sudden conviction of such an overwhelming calamity, she fell almost lifeless at her mother's feet; and a mercy it was that she did so, for not only

was she spared a period of unutterably painful suspense, worse than the most afflicting certainty, but Mrs. Darcie's attention, thus irresistibly drawn to a new object of alarm, requiring her own immediate and active exertions, she was effectually roused. Norah, who throughout all their recent trials, dangers, and fatigues, had displayed a power of endurance, a spirit of resignation and inextinguishable hopefulness, from which the mother herself had derived support, now struck down by this last dreadful trial, lay insensible at her feet. Cries brought Danvers to her assistance. The poor heart-broken girl was in a dangerous state of syncope, and all other considerations merged for the moment with Mrs. Darcie in alarm for Norah's life.

But we must go back to the origin of this disaster.

Darby Darcie, seated across the spritsail yard-arm, harpoon in hand, watched the rapid gambols of a shoal of bonetta as they darted

past the swift ship, or crossed her bows with as much ease as if she had been at anchor. He was an adept at the sport, and numerous spectators, leaning over the ship's bows, were eagerly applauding his success, as he had struck and brought up three large fish. It was fatiguing work, and his uneasy dangerous seat having begun to cramp his limbs, he was about to retire, when a remarkably fine fish appeared sporting in the clear water, just beyond the distance at which it was possible to strike him. The temptation to a keen sportsman was irresistible; but Darby watched the shy animal for some time in vain. At length it appeared immediately beneath him, but at a depth which almost precluded the hope of success.

"Now, sir, now, sir," cried a score of eager voices.

Thus incited, the boy collected all his remaining strength, and made a desperate attempt to strike the fish. The well-urged weapon

reached its mark amidst shouts of triumph from the spectators; but poor Darby, weakened and cramped, had lost his balance in the effort, and tipping over from his dangerous and unstable seat, plunged head foremost overboard.

We have seen that Herbert, when the alarm was given, had instantly assumed a position from which he could best see the situation of the sufferer and most effectually issue his orders. The sun was now below the horizon, and, as is the case in the Tropics, it was already night. He was far from entertaining at that moment the slightest suspicion who it was that he was exerting himself to save; but he saw indistinctly a person struggling on the surface of the water, as if hurt or partially disabled, which is often the case when men fall overboard. The face turning up, Herbert, dark as it was, recognised the countenance so dear and so familiar to him, and felt assured that poor Darby must have received some se-

rious injury, depriving him in a great degree of the power to make the necessary efforts to save himself; for Darby, strong, active, and fearless, was a practised swimmer.

Apprehensive that he might lose sight of his struggling friend in the increasing darkness if he hesitated one moment, Herbert leaped overboard from his lofty position, encumbered with his clothing, regardless of his unhealed wounds; of every thing, indeed, but a determination to save Norah's brother, or to perish with him. He spoke not a word; but Captain Daunton, who was standing beside him, saw the rash act, and knew his generous motive.

Herbert, when he rose to the surface, raised his head high, shook off the water which, pouring from his thick curly hair, blinded him, drew his hand across his eyes, and once more caught sight of Darby, who was completely exhausted and sinking. A powerful swimmer, Herbert darted towards him, but without his wonted prudence. One idea had exclusively

possessed his mind; but as he caught at his sinking friend, the perishing youth with a last dying effort clutched him instinctively with that fatal death-grasp, so proverbially tenacious, rendered still more dangerous here, by the great muscular strength of Darby Darcie, and the exhaustion which was already fast seizing upon Herbert, whose wounds on the breast and shoulder, not yet healed, had been re-opened by his violent exertions.

He felt his danger, but preserved his presence of mind: the weight so inextricably wound round his limbs rapidly increased; but he would not have shaken off his poor friend even if he could. He heard the sound of oars, fire seemed to flash from his eyes, the roaring of waters was in his head, and even then he rejoiced to think that if he could not live for Norah, he should at least die for her. As he commended his soul to God, he had a confused idea that some horrid sea-monster had seized upon him, and his senses failed.

The boats had halted, fearful of over-shooting their object, but nothing could be heard or seen. Every eye, every ear was on the alert; for such scenes, though unhappily not very unfrequent, are painfully exciting even to the most callous.

"I see him!" shouted Chouchow, whose sharp eye swept the surface of the water with a keenness of vision granted to few. "Give way gently," he added. "Starboard a little, —Starboard yet.—Hold water.—I have him!"

'Twas only the life-buoy! Again they lay perfectly still in the boats, almost despairing of success; for if those they sought were still living, here, close to the life-buoy, would be their only hope of finding them.

A strange wild scream was heard. It was no voice from those they sought; it was too loud and harsh: no faint cry from exhausted sufferers. Many of the men felt a superstitious awe creeping over them; but it was

repeated, and not far off, and they closed up with it.

A shout of joy broke forth. It was the prisoner, the Seccalava, supporting the apparently lifeless bodies of Herbert and young Darcie, so interlaced that it was found difficult to separate them. They were taken into the cutter, whilst the jolly-boat was at once despatched to report that both had been found, and to give notice of the desperate state in which they would be brought back to the ship.

The shout from the boats had reached the Petrel, and every preparation had been made for getting the sufferers on board. The means required by the usual mode of treating such cases had been preparing from the moment the accident had occurred.

Poor Norah had been at length restored to consciousness, just in time to hear that animating shout. She looked up at Danvers. She could not speak, but her expressive counte-

nance urged him to give some consolation, or rather asked whether she might not venture to derive some hope.

"That shout, my dear young lady, without doubt, announces that our friends are saved. Compose yourself;—I must leave you, to attend to them; I hear a boat coming alongside;" and he flew to the deck.

Danvers had made a rash assertion, though he could not doubt that the shout had broken forth at the unexpected recovery of one or both; and knowing exactly how long they had been in the water, he felt confidence in his means for restoring animation, should it have become suspended. It was impossible to resist the temptation of administering some ray of comfort to Norah.

But Norah's feelings were by far too deeply interested to allow her to draw much consolation from that which a moment's consideration taught her might imply that one of them only had been found; and with

what cruel sufferings did that dreadful question, that appalling *which,* wring her affectionate heart. This fearful doubt admitted of no alleviation, every moment it lasted was an age of misery.

The party in the cabin were now exquisitely alive to every sound,—to every word spoken upon the deck. They had scarcely heard the boat come alongside, when Daunton's friendly voice came down the skylight to them.

"They are safe!" he said, almost choking with emotion. "They are both safe!"

Again they heard a second boat come alongside. There was movement, bustle, and whispering, but no noise. An interval of painful suspense followed. Again Daunton spoke to them.

"Danvers," he said, "is satisfied that there is no danger; but the sufferers must be left wholly to him. Neither of them have received any material injury. We must be patient and thankful!"

Once more did they pour forth their thanksgivings, embracing each other in a tumult of joy. They knew that Daunton was truth itself,—their hopes returned, their fears were gone.

Oh, that men would bear in mind that truth is the very spirit of God! It blesseth him who scrupulously adheres to it; it enables him to shed peace and confidence around him, daily, hourly, momentarily, whilst it brings to himself peace of mind and self-esteem.

Falsehood, on the other hand, is the curse of social life. It is the peculiar attribute of Satan, the brand with which he marks his besotted slaves so distinctly, that those who run may read. No action is great, if tainted with falsehood; truth ennobles the most trivial.

"The gentlemen are no longer in any danger," was the first message. They were, after a time, told that they were "both doing well, and fully restored to consciousness."

Thus again were peace and happiness restored to our much-enduring friends. Danvers, as soon as his presence could be dispensed with at the hospital, made his report to the Captain, and hastened to the ladies. His looks alone were cheering.

"We are going on extremely well," he said. "Your son, Mrs. Darcie, will suffer from a severe sprain, and it will require a few days to re-establish his strength. Mr. Herbert would even now have been completely restored but for his wounds, which not having been quite healed, he will suffer some inconvenience from them, in consequence of his late exertions."

"Wounds!" exclaimed Norah, "and did he, wounded as he already was, and for us too, so wholly forget himself to rescue poor Darby? Oh, Mr. Danvers, what do we not owe to him?"

"He particularly desired me, Miss Darcie, to tell you, that both he and Darby owe their lives wholly to you."

"To me!" exclaimed the astonished girl. "Alas, I could only pray for them."

"And yet is it simple matter-of-fact that you did become, in the hands of a merciful Providence, indirectly, but most truly, the means of saving them both."

"This is strange, Mr. Danvers, but you would not trifle with our feelings."

"You will recollect," said Danvers, gravely, "that whilst passing from the cavern on shore to the Petrel's boat, one of the pirates rushed suddenly upon you, and that Herbert's sabre was in the very act of striking him down, when, terrified as you were, you stayed his hand, and pleaded for the poor wretch's life. It is that man, whose life you then saved, who has now saved your brother and his friend. Our boats would have been too late; in fact, our boats had missed them."

"How? how was it? how could that poor ignorant creature, a pirate and a robber too, do a deed like this?"

"Calm yourself, and be seated. They are safe—will soon be fully restored to us; and their rescue may well be spoken of, and listened to, with pleasure, for I have examined the Seccalava pirate."

Danvers thought this the best mode of soothing their excited feelings, for to direct their thoughts to any other subject just then, would have been impossible; whilst to prove that her own mercy-loving disposition had been the real cause of their preservation must be most grateful to Norah.

"The Seccalava," he resumed, "though silent and reserved, has in various ways shown a devoted attachment to Herbert. It would appear, as far as we can understand him through Manoel, that he considers himself bound by some superstitious tie, to the service of the man who spared his life. He was sitting alone in the main channel, which was his habit, and was little moved by anything that had happened, till he saw Herbert spring over-

board, when he lowered himself gently into the water from the chains, without noise, wholly unperceived in the dark, and swimming off came up fresh, vigorous, and full of activity, at the critical moment. He grasped Herbert, and screamed to the boats which he both saw and heard, though they could not see him. And thus, my dear ladies, by Herbert's express wish, I explain to you, that both he and our young friend Darby, are indebted to the generous mercy of Miss Norah for their lives; for Herbert justly says, that but for her prompt interference, he would have slain the man who has now preserved them both."

This was indeed a gratifying view of the case to Norah; and not the less so, that she felt after all Herbert had suffered for her, the first effort of his reviving spirit had been this generous attempt to attribute his preservation to her.

An hour afterwards Danvers informed them that both patients slept soundly. A quiet and

hopeful night succeeded to that melancholy evening; and the morning found the invalids so much recovered, that Danvers promised they should visit the deck cabin.

Darby, who was now suffering chiefly from a violent sprain, was soon after able to rejoin his delighted family; and Herbert late in the afternoon, was assisted to a couch in the deck-cabin, where the whole party were soon assembled round him.

It was a joyful meeting. He was pale and feeble, but if he had lost his good looks, he had become much more interesting in the new character of an invalid, and that too under circumstances highly advantageous to a lover, in the eyes of a generous and somewhat enthusiastic mistress.

Mrs. Darcie had hitherto, with all her regard for Herbert, and all her obligations to him, felt some uneasiness at having sanctioned, or at least observed without remonstrance, this growing attachment, in the absence of the Colonel,

who loved his daughter and was justly proud of her, but who avowedly entertained somewhat ambitious views for her future establishment. But how, she now asked herself, could she have prevented that which such an extraordinary combination of circumstances had so irresistibly produced?

Darby's honest face glowed with gratitude and affection for his friend and preserver. And there was one recollection still more dear to the generous boy, for it was constantly present to his mind, that during the whole period of unutterable, maddening misery, which had intervened between their having received information of the danger of the Thames, and their complete defeat of the hideous wretches who had for a moment gained possession of her, whilst all around him had shared in a greater or less degree his intense sufferings, Herbert's wretchedness had equalled his own. He had seen Herbert struck as it were with a blight; pale, agitated, enfeebled, and he had

heard hints that his intellect had been disturbed. No word had ever passed between them relative to that awful period; nor can words describe the deep devotion of Darby's attachment to Herbert, from that moment. He had hinted this to his mother and sister, in the overflowing of a grateful heart, and as Herbert lay before them pale and suffering, the recollection of all that had passed, of all that he had done and suffered for them, could not but make him an object of deep interest and marked attention to both mother and daughter.

"And then," said Darby, as he was in a whispering conference, enlarging upon his friend's merits. "And then to think that by my folly and negligence I should bring all this upon him, and nearly sacrifice his life as well as my own."

Emma, whose extreme youth freed her from all constraint, had constituted herself Herbert's nurse and aide-de-camp whenever he was

on deck with them, was now in virtue of her office, seated on the edge of his couch. She had devoted herself to her new duties with so much energy that everything else seemed to be forgotten. Both Tandy and Jacko were at a heavy discount. Somers was the only person who profited by this sudden change; for even her curiosity, although in the case of the log, excited by her love of a little innocent mischief, had taken a nap; and she had forgotten to make her purposed inquiries respecting the palpable difference of opinion between the Captain and Mr. Somers, upon an important professional question, which had suggested to her quick perception certain doubts whether Mr. Somers was really the great sea-officer, which he had assumed to be, in the matter of the log.

And in this quiet, domestic way things passed on board the Petrel, without interruption, after the disastrous adventure of Darby. Both he and his friend were rapidly recover-

ing; for if Norah Darcie's dangers had produced such a terrible state of agitation in Herbert's mind as to destroy his health and shake almost his reason, in the short space of forty-eight hours, her cheering presence in health and safety re-established his exhausted strength, and almost cured his re-opened wounds, in about the same period of time.

A learned philosopher might have written a volume at least upon this striking instance of the power of mind over body, alternating from one extreme to the other, in equal portions of time, and after so short an interval. We, in our simplicity, merely state the fact, and quite satisfied that no fair damsel will doubt our word, leave it to wiser heads than ours to analyse the process.

On the second evening after the late events, the little party were seated in the deck-cabin, enjoying the cool night air.

"Pray, Captain Daunton," said Norah, suddenly, after a fit of reflection of unusual dura-

tion, "what can be done for that poor Madagascar man, who rendered us all such an important service in saving our friends?"

"He has not been forgotten," replied Daunton. "It is not easy to know what can be done for him. Manoel knows something of his language, and of the manners of his country, and we will do what we can; but, as with all ignorant people, the mode of thinking and acting prevalent in his own country, and amongst his own caste, is to him the only right or even rational rule, we will endeavour to serve him in his own way."

"He considers himself," observed Danvers, "the slave of Herbert, and thinks of what he has done as a mere act of duty, and, in fact, important as his assistance proved to be, the act was simply a slight exertion of strength and activity, accompanied with no sort of danger to himself."

"Indeed," resumed Daunton, addressing Norah, "you, who saved his life, under cir-

cumstances which would have terrified most ladies out of all active consideration for other people, have reaped a rich reward for the generous act, and you deserved it."

Poor Norah's eyes filled with tears as Daunton spoke, but they sprang from neither pain nor sorrow. Herbert looked at the lovely girl with an expression which, glowing as it was with admiration and deep affection, was pure and gentle as the fair object of it.

There was at that moment, in the cabin of the little Petrel, small as was the circle, much real happiness, and thoughts were busy though lips were closed.

But this did not altogether suit our vivacious little friend Emma, who, from her accustomed post at Herbert's side, looking half saucily, half reproachfully, at Norah, and tossing her little head in affected anger, thus addressed her:

"When we are at home, and alone, there's no end to the twanging of that guitar, and

now that poor dear Mr. Herbert wants amusement, and can't talk much, and is dying for a little music, the guitar is as silent as he is."

The appeal was not made in vain, for Herbert raised the hand of his saucy pet, and put it to his lips. She had, indeed, divined his wishes.

Norah took the instrument without hesitation. She tried, but in vain, to play something lively and cheerful. Her heart was too full, and after a sweet, but grave and almost solemn prelude, she sang a beautiful Italian hymn.

CHAPTER VI.

THE next evening was calm, and the atmosphere was close, heavy, and sultry, with much thunder and severe lightning. A violent storm or hurricane appeared to be brewing, and every preparation was made by Daunton himself, as the loss of Herbert's services (for Mr. Anstey had relapsed after his exertions in the capture of the Thames) had deranged the usual routine of duty. The Master, and Mr. Yarker who had joined the ship from the Thames, had now charge of the watches, and as the whole of the day-duty below fell upon them also (for

Yarker, as Herbert had anticipated, had proved a valuable acquisition), Captain Daunton, ever considerate, took upon himself the morning watch, appointing Darby Darcie to take charge of it, under his guidance. By this means, and by carrying on much of the more important duty on deck during the day, which had been habitually performed by Herbert, he greatly relieved the only efficient executive officers he now had. But the storm passed away.

"It is only," Captain Daunton observed to Herbert, "my turning out an hour or two earlier in the morning, which I care little about; and if either of our only working men should knock up, we may be awkwardly situated. I am an old First-Lieutenant, you know, and like it."

Herbert soon, however, began to take upon himself as much of his duty as he was equal to, though he was frequently obliged to rest himself in the deck-cabin.

"You are looking very pale and unwell, my love," said Mrs. Darcie to Norah, one morning; "leave your books with me,—I will give Emma her French lesson, and you can take your work upon deck. The fresh air will relieve you."

"It is only a slight headache and will soon go off," said Norah, instantly complying with so agreeable a suggestion.

But if she really had looked pale, when she left the cabin below, she certainly had a very beautiful colour, when entering the deck-cabin. It might have been the cool, gentle breeze which fanned her fair cheek, as she ascended to and crossed over the quarter-deck, or it might have been because she now found herself, for the first time, tête-à-tête with Herbert. Whatever the cause, we assert the fact.

Norah had rarely if ever looked more blooming, or more attractive, and it was quite evident that Herbert was of this opinion.

Nor, in truth, did the slightest vestige of even her headache remain.

It was, I have said, the first time that they had been alone together since the ladies had embarked on board the Petrel; and when the variety of agitating events which had preceeded this meeting are taken into consideration, it will scarcely be wondered at that both should have felt a little embarrassed on the occasion.

How much had these young-hearted and unworldly people thought of each other, yet how little had they said. Herbert rose, took her unresisting hand, and pressed it gently to his lips. Not a word was spoken, and both sat down mechanically, without well knowing whether they were standing or sitting.

Here was the bold, fearless, impetuous Frank Herbert trembling, under whatever influence it might be, absolutely trembling, and unable to speak, because he was suddenly left alone with

the object of his devoted love and admiration, for a free and unrestrained conversation with whom, he had often thought, when it appeared hopeless, that he would have given his right arm, lest she should be suddenly torn from him, before he could tell her how tenderly, how passionately he loved her. And now that fortune had brought this about, he had not a word to say for himself, though moments were precious.

Men are at all times strange, inconsistent creatures, but men in love; Lord help them! Fools all! fools all!

"I was fearful last evening that you were unwell," stammered Herbert. "All these alarms and fatigues are too much for you. I entreat you will take more care of yourself."

This was certainly not much to the purpose, but it broke the ice.

"It would rather become me," said his fair companion, smiling as she regained her self-possession, "to give, than to receive that caution,

for though more than sufficiently careful for your friends, you are certainly not very remarkable for taking care of yourself, as both Darby and I have reason to know."

"Darby and you little know," said Herbert, becoming animated, "how joyously I would risk a hundred lives in your service, and feel myself richly rewarded by one word. To see you thus, and to hear the music of that sweet voice—to be permitted to address you in this manner, are blessings no words can describe; but I tremble to think by how slight a tenure they are mine. You will be going to India, and what is to become of me, I know not; nay, I care not," he said despondingly, and he looked so wretched, that Norah, who knew his worth, and felt deeply all that he had done, and all that he had suffered for her, could not look upon his pale, agitated countenance unmoved.

"I have no wish to go to India, Herbert," she said, in tones more soft, more sweet, more

musical to Herbert's soul, than aught he had ever heard.

Again he lost all power of utterance; and again she spoke: "Do you think it likely that we shall meet a ship going to India?"

He felt in his heart, that Norah rather feared than wished for such an occurrence.

"No, thank Heaven!" he answered, springing up from his seat, as if the conviction that Norah did not wish to go to India, had at once restored him to health and strength. "No!" he continued, "I think it now highly improbable, and every passing day makes it more so. And yet," he added, after a short pause, "it is horribly selfish to wish to detain you here, amidst so many dangers and discomforts."

Norah Darcie smiled at this self-denying freak.

"And do you really imagine," she said, in a tone savouring of remonstrance, almost of reproach, "that we are not happy as well as

grateful, to remain amongst such friends, Herbert? remember from whom you rescued us and whence you brought us."

He did recollect it all, nor was any one circumstance connected with the late events at all likely to be forgotten by either of them. These reminiscences did indeed, at that very moment, give a pleasing distraction to their present unwitnessed, unrestrained intercourse, which almost prevented them from conversing. They had much to communicate to each other, no future opportunity was likely to occur, nor was this likely to last many minutes. Yet little was said, and much of that little was broken and not very intelligible in words, though perfectly understood by their hearts.

Emma was heard approaching, for though her step was light, her tongue was in full activity.

"I can't stop now," she said.

"One moment, Miss Emma," replied Tandy's insinuating voice; "Here's poor Jacko

quite melancholy. You never take any notice of him now."

Whether Mr. Tandy's interruption of Emma's progress was purely accidental, or whether in his sharp-sighted sagacity he was unwilling that the deck-cabin should be so abruptly invaded, can never be known.

Herbert, who had started at the sound of Emma's voice, bitterly reproaching himself mentally, for having made so little of such a golden occasion, now collected himself.

He seized Norah's hand. "Permit me," he said hurriedly, "to ask one great favour."

As he was not absolutely forbidden to proceed, and as his fair prisoner made no effort to escape, though she appeared rather startled at his sudden vehemence, he added, "Permit me to call you Norah."

His voice trembled as he spoke, but as our fair favourite intimated a graceful but silent assent, he had, notwithstanding all his modest hesitations, the tact and courage to add the important clause "My Norah?"

This he timed so judiciously, that it took the full benefit of the assent, and, indeed, if the dear girl had been anxious to enter a protest against such an insidious proceeding, she would have had no time to do so, for Emma now stood in the open door-way of the cabin, chattering a few more last words to Tandy and Jacko.

That little tête-à-tête was a bright spot in their young lives, often looked back upon amidst after troubles, with deep and tender interest.

To the great surprise of every one, Danvers included, Herbert assumed his duties the following day, with scarcely a trace of his late illness perceptible. Norah was the enchantress who had accomplished this restoration; for far beyond the skill of Danvers, zealous and able though he was, was the touch of her wand!

And was Norah conscious of the wonders she had wrought? Perhaps she might be, but she certainly never boasted of it.

Her thoughts dwelt upon India. The Colonel had taught his family to look forward to a removal to that country as a thing greatly to be desired; and so it was,—for he was a very old and able officer, and would, as a matter of course, get a brigade there, to the honour and glory of which would be attached not only a large income, of which he knew the full value, but moreover that which the gallant Colonel valued very much more, the chance of gaining distinction in the field of battle as a general officer. We have said he was ambitious, and this was an object of ambition worthy of him.

But Colonel Darcie, with many fine qualities, had a very decided predilection for ruling his family as well as his regiment; and though by no means harsh in either case, the fond, gentle disposition of the mother, tempered by a sound judgment, and accompanied by great kindness of manner, had won for her more warmth of affection from her children, than,

much as they loved and respected him, the somewhat stern and unbending tone of the Colonel had been calculated to inspire. He never condescended to disguise his thoughts or his wishes. Ambition was his ruling passion; and since his daughter had been of an age to comprehend it, she had often heard allusions made to the certainty of her marrying brilliantly in India, amongst other advantages to be gained by going thither.

This had troubled Norah little. She thought of marriage as most very young girls do, as a something that must come some time or other. Her mother had been married, and therefore it was right and proper to marry. She was fond of music and dancing, and she met occasionally in society, young men who were very agreeable, and who took especial pains to make themselves so to her. All this was very good fun. She was very happy, but she did not care one straw for any of them, and had no wish for change of any sort, more especially

for such a change as would separate her from her mother.

At the Cape she had been introduced into society at a very early age, and had met many Anglo-Indian gentlemen, generally past the prime of life; men who had gone thither in hope to recover their lost health. Most of them were of course pale, sallow invalids,—though clever, well-informed, agreeable men. Some were reported to be very rich; and these the young military men called Nabobs: so that amongst her young friends, whenever the probability of the regiment proceeding on to India was talked of, she had often been told that she would certainly marry a Nabob; and as the only specimens of the genus Nabob which had fallen under her observation, were in her eyes, elderly gentlemen, who had much more need of old nurses than of young wives, she had begun to feel rather uncomfortable at her father's idea that she would be sure to marry well in India.

It was whilst Norah's mind had been in this state of feeling about marriage and Nabobs that the Petrel arrived at Simon's Bay to refit, and to prepare for another cruize; and her favourite brother Darby received permission to spend some time with his family at Cape Town. Darby, like all young middies, liked to talk about his ship, and said so much about their young First Lieutenant; how he had been promoted for a desperate cutting-out affair, in which, after his commanding officer had been killed, and the case had become almost hopeless, Herbert had assumed the lead, and carried the enemy's ship. How he had saved some men off a wreck, at the risk of his life, in a heavy gale of wind in the Bay of Biscay, with a winter's night coming on, when everybody else thought it impossible. What a kind-hearted, generous fellow he was; and how particularly kind to Darby himself; which last, was quite as great a feather in his cap, in Norah's eyes, as any one of his grand exploits.

Norah at length became desirous to see this wonderful youth, and began to think how very unlike he must be to a Nabob.

Meanwhile Herbert's position, as First Lieutenant, obliging him to superintend the refit of his ship, he could not run up to Cape Town, as the other officers did, but as soon as the Petrel was reported ready for sea, Captain Daunton, who had little taste for balls and dinner parties, returned to his ship, and gave him permission to take his turn at Cape Town, where he became the guest of the Admiral, to whom he was favourably known.

Herbert had heard of Norah's beauty, and had long wished to see her, though he little suspected how much she had heard of him. Mrs. Vaughan, who was Mrs. Darcie's most intimate friend, was well acquainted with Herbert's family, and had known him when a child. He became, therefore, at once a frequent and familiar guest at her house, which,

as before said, was one of the gayest and pleasantest in Cape Town.

The Colonel had called upon Herbert immediately on his arrival, and Mrs. Darcie had sent him an invitation for the following day, and the Admiral, who was a gay, cheerful old man,—one of those who still assume to be young, in spite of gout and other infirmities, had always much consideration for his young guests.

"Herbert," he said, "the Petrel's sailing orders will be ready in a few days, so make the most of your time, only tell Saunders when you don't intend to dine at home. I'll give you a day's notice when your orders will be ready."

On the same evening in which he had come up to the town, he and Norah met at Mrs. Vaughan's, the party was small, but both music and dancing were the more enjoyed by the young people, because there had been no positive expectation of either. The acquaint-

ance of Norah Darcie and Frank Herbert was thus commenced under favourable and unceremonious circumstances.

To have heard much of a young lady's attractions is seldom advantageous to a first impression. Norah Darcie was by no means a regular beauty, inasmuch as her eyes, her teeth, and her hair excepted, there was not a feature in her face which did not in some degree lie open to the test of severe criticism; yet her complexion was brilliant, and tinged with a rosy hue ever varying; her voice music itself, and the expression of her countenance at once joyous, generous, and intelligent, her figure perfect. In short her beauty, such as it was, enchanted Herbert, and the more so, because whatever other people might think of her charms, it was quite clear that she never thought about them herself.

Little did the enamoured Herbert suspect that Norah Darcie had been anxious for this meeting. Little did he imagine, either, that

she had been considering in her own mind, how very unlike he must be to the Nabobs! and it was quite as well that he did not; for though he was far from being presumptuous, he would very probably have deemed himself much farther advanced in her good graces than he really was. It is easy to believe upon very slight grounds that which we wish to believe.

Norah danced with him again and again, for it was merely a small party of intimate friends, and was much pleased with him as a partner. But although she was evidently gratified at his admiration of her singing, expressed in few words, but words which displayed both taste and judgment, it was even when they separated that evening, chiefly as a kind and valuable friend to Darby, that she thought so favourably of him. She was quite sure of this herself, and even told Darby so, when he observed to her next morning, that he was glad to see that she liked his friend.

The society at the Cape was then particularly agreeable, though the circle was not very wide. Herbert passed a delightful day at the Darcies'; Norah and he met every day somewhere; indeed, as he was daily in expectation of being told by the Admiral that he must start to-morrow, he could not do less than announce every morning to Mrs. Darcie another day's reprieve for Darby, which placed him in the absolute necessity of calling daily at the house. All this was very delightful, but time flew rapidly.

"Herbert," said the Admiral one fatal morning at breakfast, "your despatches are ready, but I give you the day to take leave of your friends; I admire your taste and discernment, the pleasantest house and the prettiest girl in the colony vouch for both."

Herbert felt very much like a man who had been awakened suddenly from a very delightful dream to hear the melancholy intelligence that his banker had failed; but the Admiral's

jokes were not always remarkable for delicacy, though he was a kind-hearted man, and Herbert had sufficient presence of mind to escape them, by immediately expressing his acknowledgments for this worthy chief's great kindness, which quite silenced the Admiral, who, as Herbert well knew, did not like to be thanked.

This rock avoided—for it would have horrified him to listen to any more direct allusion to the subject next his heart, he began his little preparations for departure, and at as early an hour as propriety permitted, he wended his way with a most disconsolate face, and an aching heart, to Mrs. Darcie's house, to announce that Darby must start with him early the following morning, as they were ordered to sea.

Norah, who was present, felt considerably discomposed, either by Darby's sudden recal, or by Herbert's long face, or by both, but of course it was quite natural that she should

feel the loss of her favourite brother. Herbert would fain have taken leave of her without the aid of witnesses, but there was no chance of that. He sat quite silent, very much perplexed, and if the truth must be told, looking very foolish. Mrs. Darcie was so much engrossed with her own grief that she saw nothing remarkable in this, and Norah, who seemed to be quite as dejected as her mother, not only did not speak to Herbert, but was evidently about to leave the room. Aroused by this, he stammered out that he was going to take leave of Mrs. Vaughan, which, imperfectly as it was expressed, was much rather addressed to Norah than to her mother, for it was quite evident that the good lady had just then neither eyes nor ears for any one but Darby.

We have somewhat irregularly thrown this ray of light upon the first stage of Herbert's acquaintance with Norah Darcie, for the especial gratification of our fair readers, for to

please those dear creatures is the great object of our labours, and light will they be, if we can gain their approbation. Little will we then care for the cut and thrust severity of grave and learned gainsayers! From all such grim potentates we appeal to the fair.

"I begin to think, Herbert," said Captain Daunton to his First Lieutenant, "that I have tried this track long enough. The season is past now for outward-bound ships taking this channel; send for Mr. Marliner, I'll bear up for Joanna. If the pirate is gone to the northward, as I suspect, he will not fail to have touched at Joanna, or at least to have communicated with that island for information."

"There can be no doubt of that, sir," replied Herbert; "he will probably by some means have heard of the capture of the Fra Diavolo, and will have concluded that we should cruize here for him."

Mr. Marliner came, and a course was shaped for Joanna.

"Well, ladies," said the Captain, entering the deck-cabin, "I am come to tell you that we may expect to see Joanna to-morrow or next day, which will be a change for you, though there is not much chance of our finding any ship there bound to India."

"What is Joanna like?" said Emma, who was already standing by the Captain's knee, "is it like the Cape?"

"Not at all, my dear," replied the Captain, "unless it is that you will get plenty of fruit there, but very different from the fruit at the Cape; I have never been there, but your friend, Mr. Herbert, can tell you all about it."

Emma clapped her hands for joy, at the thought of seeing a new country, with plenty of new fruits; and flew off in great haste to look for Herbert, that she might as she said, "hear all about it."

"Do you purpose to make any stay at Joanna, Captain Daunton?" asked Mrs. Darcie.

"Oh, no," he replied; "I call there for intel-

ligence, and to procure, if possible, a celebrated Joannese pilot, who will most probably be found there. At this season we may get some refreshments also."

"Are they a civilized people?" asked Norah.

"By no means," replied Daunton; "the island is small, and the inhabitants, neither numerous nor warlike, are frequently attacked and plundered by the countrymen of your Seccalava protégé. But the island lies directly in the track of ships bound to India, and from having had very much intercourse with English ships, they have acquired some knowledge of our habits and language. Many of them find employment as pilots, or interpreters, and in the service of more warlike but more ignorant chiefs, of small states on the northern part of this coast. But Herbert knows more of them than I do."

CHAPTER VII.

THERE had been a fine fresh breeze all night, and after breakfast the following morning, the ladies came out of the cabin to look at Joanna.

It was a small triangularly formed island, mountainous in the interior, and having its loftiest eminences crowned with fine forest trees. Below these in many places were orange and lemon groves, whilst a belt of palm-trees, chiefly of the cocoa-nut kind, occupied a large portion of the more level lower land, approaching towards the sea. As the ship drew

nearer to the anchorage, which was little more than five hundred yards from the shore, the water being very deep beyond that distance, large patches of the graceful banana bending and waving to the sea-breeze, gave a rich garden-like appearance to the landscape. Groups of low mean huts with projecting roofs of palm-leaf, were perfectly in harmony with all around them, whilst here and there, a small dilapidated stone building half hid in foliage varied the scene and pleased the eye. Half a mile to the left of the landing-place was a walled-in town, with square towers on its sea-face. The whole, including the rich mountainous background with its dark masses of rich foliage, was strikingly beautiful, and the more interesting to our fair friends, that this purely tropical vegetation was almost new to them, we may say altogether so; for though they might have seen specimens of some of these plants, it is only when they are seen in large masses, and in full luxuriant growth, giving

such a very peculiar feature to the scene, that they can be at all understood.

"And this," said Norah, "is tropical vegetation in all its glory. And glorious it is!" she added, with solemnity.

There is something awful as well as beautiful in the feelings excited when tropical scenery bursts suddenly, and for the first time, upon the young wanderer from northern regions, in all its splendour. He almost fancies himself in a new world; so bright, so gorgeous, so strangely novel, is all before him.

"'Tis lovely, most lovely," resumed the delighted girl; "and beneath us the dark blue sea, just rippled with the breeze, babbling and breaking in tiny waves upon the shore, is in perfect harmony with the landscape."

This was rather thought than spoken, so faintly was it murmured; but not an accent was lost to Herbert, as he gazed covertly upon her countenance, where might be read, at least by him, every passing thought.

"True," he observed, "it is lovely; and never shall I forget my own sensations when a similar scene first met my eyes. Though I was then a boy, the impression of it is as fresh as ever; and yet," he added, "so much more vivid, so much more lofty, are your perceptions of the wonders and beauties of nature, than mine were, that I feel humiliated."

The bay was dotted with canoes, some of which had been permitted to come alongside. Daunton smiled to see his young First Lieutenant so rapt in admiration of scenes upon which he had been accustomed to see him look with prosaic matter-of-fact calculations relative to wood, water, and live stock! But he was summoned to receive a queer-looking youth of great pretensions, who was pressing himself rather freely upon the worthy Captain's attention.

He was a dark, unattractive young man, about five feet four, wearing a faded and patched naval uniform coat, somewhat too

long for him, adorned with about two-thirds of an epaulet upon the left shoulder, with a blue cotton cloth round his waist, so disposed as to form a very decent sort of petticoat. His feet and neck were bare, and an old straw hat, with a wide slouched rim, covered a thick mass of sun-burnt unkempt hair.

The sight of this person recalled Herbert at once from poetry to prose. The ladies retired to the deck-cabin, except Emma, who begged hard to see the fun, and having seized Daunton's hand, felt that she had carried her point.

"How do, Capn? how do, sare? Prince Tatamadi, I; my father one king here; all same King George. Dis man, him Lord Buckermady; him take wash—spose you stay—plenty bullock, plenty fowl, plenty yam, plantain-stalk, ebery ting—all ting for King George. I English too."

This harangue had been attended with much gesticulation and grimace. The orator was questioned about the Liffey and the pirate,

but to no purpose. He was wholly in the commissariat and begging line. At last he said, "Ship come, ship go, all same; Bombay Jack, he come,—he know all."

Proper persons had been sent on shore to purchase stock and plantain-stalk, which is the fodder of these regions; and the Prince seemed to have learnt that all the dealings would be on shore, for all at once he jumped into his canoe, and was paddled away in great state by two boys.

A small, middle-aged man was soon after announced as Bombay Jack. They had heard of this man as by far the most intelligent and trustworthy of the natives. He had been several times embarked in ships-of-war as pilot for these seas, and having twice been carried to Bombay, had, like other distinguished personages, earned a name derived from his greatest achievement.

Captain Daunton was extremely well pleased to have got hold of Bombay Jack as a pilot

for the coast and Archipelago to the north of Joanna, for there the chief danger lay, and Jack having lived so much on board king's ships, understood English well, and could always make himself understood. Above all, he was active, clever, and trustworthy, as he was wholly dependant, for both money and reputation, upon his certificates from British officers. He was, therefore, a valuable acquisition.

From Bombay Jack they learned that the Liffey had merely sent a boat on shore, without anchoring and had proceeded on with a strong southerly wind, and without having heard of the pirates. Further, that the pirate brigantine had passed only two days before, and, as Herbert anticipated, had by some means heard of the capture of the Fra Diavolo. Jack suspected he would go off Zanzibar, as there was much trade between that island and the Mauritius, and also with the Red Sea. But, he added, "he is supposed to haunt one

of the many harbours on the main land, for supplies."

Their new pilot was despatched on shore, to hasten off all the provisions that could be immediately procured, and to return as soon as the land wind should spring up, as Captain Daunton would proceed in pursuit of the pirate without losing an hour.

The following day the Petrel passed the remainder of the Comoro Islands, which appeared much less inviting than Joanna, and steered to the northward, in quest of the enemy, upon whose track they now were, and who could not be very far ahead of them. The wind was light on the following day and nothing was seen.

"I would not give trouble by asking for a walk amongst those beautiful groves and gardens yesterday," said Norah, when their little evening party had assembled; "but it was very tantalizing, and I think I was very good not to teaze you, Captain Daunton."

"There were, I regret to say, insuperable objections to it," replied Daunton, "or you may be well assured it would have been proposed to you. Ask Herbert, who displayed as much admiration of the prospect as you did yourself, why he did not suggest a closer inspection of it."

Norah, whose curiosity was roused, turned to Herbert.

"I might tell you, with truth, that these semi-barbarians, imbued with all the prejudices and vices of a rude Mahomedan superstition, are by no means agreeable people to visit," said Herbert. "But the fact is, also, that seeing too closely that which was so enchanting at a distance, would have deprived you of every agreeable recollection of the place. Wretched huts, filled with poverty and disease, and to the last degree uncleanly; ill-constructed stone buildings, never completely finished, yet falling rapidly to decay; town walls, through which the cattle walk at leisure,

and square towers to match,—produce a beautiful effect at a proper distance, when surrounded with, and half-concealed by, splendid foliage;—but the reality!—a very cursory acquaintance with it, would have induced you to retreat in all haste."

"What did you think of it, Darby?" said the young lady to her brother; "for you and Mr. Tandy went up to the town, and we heard such a drumming and shouting, that I suppose that queer Prince with the strange name, who was with you, was received with military honours, after the peculiar fashion of Joanna."

"Why will ye be asking so many questions, Norah, dear?" replied Darby, with that touch of brogue, which usually announced a disposition to be jocular; "but if you will have it, it's no fault of mine."

Tandy, who was present, coloured up and looked rather fidgetty, fearing apparently lest Darby's tale should compromise his dignity. He tried hard to catch Darby's eye, but it was

not to be had; if, however, he could not succeed in attracting his friend's notice, he succeeded perfectly in drawing the attention of the two young ladies to his bye-play. Tandy's evident uneasiness, and Darby's mock gravity, beneath which they clearly discerned a fund of mischievous merriment, delighted them; but of this the elders of the party were perfectly unconscious.

"Come, Darby," said the impatient Emma, shaking her brother by the arm, "why don't you begin?"

"If I must, I must," replied Darby, with a ludicrous affectation of unwillingness, catching a rapid glance at Tandy's face, which he seemed to enjoy.

"We three youngsters were allowed to go up to the town with that odd specimen of a Prince. Mr. Danvers was to have charge of us, or we of him—which was it Tandy? and Chouchow also was with us, no getting on without Chou. Having passed the first belt of cocoa-nut-

trees, we heard behind the second line of them a tremendous noise of tom-toms, and all sorts of horrid negro music coming towards us; and soon we saw a ragged crowd, carrying upon their shoulders a small stage, and surrounded by their clattering musicians. All were talking, grinning, and shouting; I thought at first that the Prince was to mount the stage, but he went straight up to Mr. Danvers. Something passed between them which I could not hear; Tandy tapped me on the shoulder, 'they are going to mount the Doctor on the stage,' he whispered; 'only think of Dr. Danvers' playing mountebank, Darby, what fun!' But he had scarcely spoken, when a huge black fellow with one eye, and a deep scar across his ugly face, seized poor Tandy unawares; I should have thought the villain was going to eat him, but that I saw Mr. Danvers was laughing, till he was obliged to lean against a tree to support himself. The rude monster, however, ugly as he was, meant no harm, for he pitched our

friend Tandy up upon the stage, and held him there, the music struck up, the crowd shouted, and off we marched in grand procession for the town, Tandy kicking and struggling manfully. On approaching the town-gate, I became alarmed for our friend, as it was evident there was not height enough for the stage to pass through, and they were now going at a killing pace. I thought the dear little fellow must be squashed, but my alarm proceeded entirely from my ignorance of the state of the fortifications of the Joannese capital, for having turned sharp to the left, they passed along outside the walls, as fast as the very rugged state of the ground would permit, till we came to an entrance far more commodious than the gateway. About twenty yards of the wall had been judiciously removed, so that the whole population, man and beast, could walk out or in without difficulty. Tandy meanwhile was very angry."

"Yes!" interrupted Tandy, "I was angry;

"and it was a great shame that you didn't help me."

"I could not, my dear fellow," replied Darby, "do anything of the sort; I could hardly stand for laughing, for I recollected how you had enjoyed the idea of Mr. Danvers occupying that elevated situation, to which you had been promoted yourself."

And Darby, at the recollection, burst out into one of those ringing merry laughs, which are so irresistibly contagious. All, more or less, caught the infection. Poor Tandy looked very discomposed, but saw it would avail him nothing to be angry.

The entrance of Captain Daunton and Herbert restored some degree of decorum, but Emma who was no respecter of dignitaries, and thought that her friend, Mr. Tandy, had been treated unkindly, turned rather sharply upon her brother, saying almost angrily,

"It was too bad of you, Darby, to laugh at

Mr. Tandy in that way. I dare say if that horrid blackamoor had laid hold of you instead of him, you would have been quite as much frightened as he was."

This was the unkindest cut of all, but Darby, who never carried his jokes to a painful extent, took up the subject in a way to soothe the offended pride of his friend.

"Frightened, you little goose," he said; "if you had seen how angry he was, you wouldn't have thought he was frightened. I have seen Tandy in many difficulties, my dear, but neither I nor any one else ever saw him frightened; and if you had waited for the end of my story, you would have found that Tandy had the best of it after all, and turned the laugh against some of us."

All was now peace and harmony, but Herbert, who wished to smoothe down Tandy's feathers completely, called upon him for an account of the palace, in which he had been received with such marked distinction.

"It's a queer palace, sir," "replied Tandy, glad to get the story out of Darby's hand, "the King came to the foot of the stairs to meet me, and such stairs! Three or four high broken stone steps led to a narrow dark passage, from which three or four more steps at a right angle with the first, led to a passage admitting some little daylight. The King looked around him with great complacency, very proud of his palace, but the Prince touched me on the shoulder, and pointing to a third short flight of steps of the same kind, and in the same state, intimated that we were coming to something very imposing.

"'Now you see,' he said, nodding his head triumphantly, as if about to astonish my ignorance.

"Having mounted the third set of steps the King took me by the hand and ushered me into the state apartment. Both he and his son were in ecstasies, when they beheld my astonishment.

"'Dere,' said his Majesty; 'all one King George.'

"It was a stone-built room about twenty-feet broad, by fifteen long, built to resemble the after or poop-cabin of an Indiaman, and was indeed a fac-simile. Not one of the defects or inconveniences of marine architecture, when applied to domestic purposes, had been omitted. The ceiling was low and studded with imitations of beams and carlines; and like the floor was slightly arched in the manner of a deck. The sides of the room were rounded a little also, and full of projecting knees; but the pride of their heart was the mimic stern, with its sloping windows with broad lockers running across this stone-built cabin below the windows, and in the centre of the lockers, was an imitation of a cased rudder head."

"Yes!" interposed Darby, "exactly so; but the cool assurance with which you pretended to admire this unique palace, assuring the grin-

ning barbarians, that King George himself could boast of nothing like it, almost killed Mr. Danvers and me, for we dared not laugh out. It would have spoiled the joke, as well as mortified our hosts."

The merriment produced by Tandy's tale, delighted him, for instead of laughing at him, they were now laughing with him, a very different thing to a proud and captious boy. Thus encouraged he proceeded: for having turned the laugh from himself, he was dying fix it upon Darby.

"Our attention," he resumed, "was now drawn by the Prince to a square port-hole on each side this stone cabin.

"'Him,' he said, pointing to the one, 'not good for noting.' Then, pointing to the other, 'dat he!' he said. Then squatting himself down upon the floor, in front of it, in a most extraordinary attitude, he sprang clean through the port-hole, frog-fashion, though there was barely space enough for him to pass through

with his limbs most skilfully packed up for the purpose. His father then followed his example, with almost equal agility, and it was quite clear that we were expected to do the same. I did not half like it, but it was a point of honour. They were both much bigger than I am, so I squatted down, as nearly as possible after their example, and sprang at it. By great good luck, I succeeded, though I struck my head severely against the upper side of the port-hole. But I was through, and found myself in a narrow dark passage. Curious to see how Mr. Danvers and Darby would get out of the scrape,"——

"Certainly," said Danvers, "I have rarely seen anything more ridiculous than the whole scene; and as soon as Tandy disappeared, Darby Darcy, with great politeness urged that, as his superior officer, I should go before him; but finding I had no such intention, and not wishing, I suppose, to be outdone by Tandy, he prepared for the feat, and took his spring

manfully; but being taller and stouter than Tandy, and perhaps not quite so well packed up, as he calls it, Darby took ground at both extremities, and stuck fast in the port-hole, which he nearly filled up."

The laugh which now arose at Darby's expense fully consoled Tandy for his sufferings in that way, and the subject would have dropped but for Emma's curiosity.

"Oh, do tell us what you saw, when you got through," she exclaimed; "do now, dear Darby."

"Well, my dear," said Darby, good-humouredly, "I am afraid you are blessed with an inordinate share of curiosity, but our mountain, like many others, will only bring forth its mouse. When they had dragged me through, for move I could not, I found myself in a dark passage, blind at one end, whilst the other led only to a small cell-like room, very scantily lighted, and still more scantily furnished, which constituted in itself

the whole suite of the King's private apartments.

"'Ha!' exclaimed the Prince, seeing, perhaps, that we looked disappointed; 'bad mans no can come!' then drawing the edge of his right hand significantly across his bare throat, he pointed to his father, intimating clearly that this singular den had been constructed with a view to personal safety."

"And pray," said Captain Daunton, who had only just returned once more to the cabin, addressing himself to Danvers, "how was it that Tandy came to be selected for the post of honour throughout this farce?"

"I confess, sir," replied Danvers, "that Tandy seemed to enjoy the joke so exceedingly, at my expense, whilst I was labouring to avoid public honours, that I did, in self-defence, intimate that he was really the great man of the party; and perhaps there might have been something in his manner which confirmed my hint."

"How I should have liked to have seen all this," said Emma, earnestly. "If I could but be a boy, I'd be a midshipman, like Darby."

Captain Daunton had held a long conference with Bombay Jack, the result of which had been a determination to steer direct for Zanzibar, off which island, as it had much trade, the pirate would most probably fix his cruizing ground, now that the season was past for outward-bound Indiamen going through this channel.

"Herbert," said the Captain, "I find this man very intelligent, and I think we may rely upon him. He speaks of coral reefs existing on our track, which being out of sight of land must be dangerous by night; but, at any rate, that cuts both ways. The pirate is quite as likely to stick upon one of them as we are; but we will take all possible precautions."

"Shall I pass the stream-cable through the stern-port, sir, in readiness to bring her up stern foremost?"

"Do; but get the stream-anchor aft, too for a ship's length may make all the difference, and the upper fluke, also, might prick the ship's bottom. He tells me that the rise and fall of the tide is considerably greater here than we found it to the north of Joanna, and the currents more variable and more violent."

Many other preparations were quietly made, without alarming their fair passengers, who, happily for themselves, had such implicit confidence in their friends, that they were by no means inquisitive.

"We are now quite assured," said Herbert, whilst walking the deck with Norah and Emma, "that the Liffey, and our friends in Il Fra Diavolo, have both escaped the pirates, and I trust that our gallant Chartres, with Captain Timmins and the rest, are near the Cape by this time."

"That is delightful," replied Norah; "and now that you seem to have lost all hope of meeting a vessel to take us on to India, permit

me to ask you, Mr. Herbert, how long do you think it will be before you will return to the Cape, and get rid of us that way?"

"I am very much afraid, my Norah," he said, in a very subdued voice, availing himself of a momentary freak of Emma with her friend Jacko, to introduce for the second time that insidious and unauthorized phrase, "you have now no chance of escaping from us, either one way or the other, for the next two months."

"Only think of that, Emma," rejoined Norah, to her sister, who had returned to her in time to have heard Herbert's last words.

"I don't think you are very unhappy about it," said the Pet, saucily. Then, turning to Herbert, she added, "I know she was very glad we didn't find a ship at that pretty island, to carry us to India, though Mamma was sorry for it; and as for me, I should like to stay altogether, and be a midshipman."

But their conversation was too agreeable to all parties to escape interruption long.

"A strange sail two points on the lee bow!" was the long wished-for announcement heard from the mast-head.

"Keep her away two points," said the Captain, coming out from the deck-cabin. "Set the fore-topmast and top-gallant stun-sails, Herbert."

The ladies descended to the cabin; the stun-sails were set, and all the sails trimmed for their new course. Herbert then proceeded to the mast-head with his telescope.

"A large brigantine, sir," he reported; "a regular clipper; she's standing the same way we are, but with less wind. You must soon see her from the deck, as of course we near her fast."

The wind, however, died away, and it was late in the afternoon before the strange sail was visible from the deck.

There could be no doubt of its being the vessel they sought; it was certainly the pirate; and Bombay Jack's surmise was confirmed:

she had been steering for Zanzibar. The Petrel, too, was decidedly coming up with her, though it was equally clear that she had no chance of getting within gun-shot of her before sunset. As the nights, however, were generally calm, it was hoped if they could succeed in nearing the chase much before it became dark, that she would still be in sight at daylight, and with a whole day before them they might surely catch her on the morrow.

"Are there any coral-reefs directly in our way now?" asked Daunton of his new pilot.

"Dere many small reef 'bout here, but in day noting to be 'fraid, Capitan," replied Bombay Jack.

"But I'm speaking of the night," said the Captain.

"By night never can say true, if see no land. 'Spose him catch reef, we catch he: 'spose we catch reef, him get away."

The Captain and Herbert looked at each other, as if Bombay Jack's logic had not been

quite so satisfactory to them, as it had been to Jack himself.

"What do you say to that, Mr. Marliner?" asked the Captain.

"I like his honesty, sir," replied the Master. "Any other native pilot would have said boldly, that there was nothing in the way."

"True," said Herbert, "but this fellow is accustomed chiefly to their Dows, and when they take the ground they lower their sail, strike their mast, and all hands jump out upon the reef. Then, if necessary, they throw overboard part of their cargo, and if the water is smooth they get off again very easily. He has no idea at what risk these long, sharp, taut-rigged craft, with such enormous top-weight, take the ground."

"Very true," observed the Captain, "but we are in chase of an enemy, and must run all risks, taking, however, every precaution."

At sunset, the long, black, low hull of the chase, was visible from the deck nearly be-

calmed, which was indeed proved by the rapidity with which the Petrel had closed with her latterly, though she was not going much more than a mile an hour.

As the wind was still falling, the boats were hoisted out after dark, to be ready for service, should they find themselves becalmed near the chase, which was not improbable. The waning moon now became visible, and although obscured by haze and cloud, it gave material light, as it enabled them to observe that the lofty clouds were driven across her, with a velocity which notified that it was even then blowing hard over their heads.

About midnight, whilst the Petrel having again caught a breeze, was once more going about three knots, the harsh grating of her keel over coral rocks, was suddenly both heard and felt, producing what is, with the single exception, perhaps, of a severe earthquake, the most alarming and perplexing sensation that can be imagined.

"Hard a-port the helm," said the Captain, coolly, "Let go the stream anchor,—Clew up, haul down, square the main-yard,—Lower away the top-sails,—Stop her!"

The immediate object was to check the ship's way, and as soon as possible to stop her. She had as yet struck no solid rock, but a large one had become distinctly visible on her larboard beam, within a few yards, and every foot she might advance was full of danger; especially as the light clouds were flying so rapidly over their heads, driven by a strong wind, which, should it descend, would soon raise a short, breaking, heavy sea on the reef, which was unsheltered, and insure their destruction. At the same time, if the pirate should discover their situation, even with a moderate breeze, he might knock the ship to pieces, and take or destroy them all.

What were the feelings of Mrs. Darcie and Norah, when thus suddenly aroused from their peaceful midnight slumbers, by that quivering

and indescribably-terrible sensation, which seizes every plank and timber of the ill-starred ship, and every fibre of one's frame! whilst the harsh rough grating of the ship's keel as it forces its way through the crumbling coral, proclaims to the most unpractised ear the presence of extreme danger, and the probability of immediate wreck.

A brief period of dreadful suspense ensued in the cabin, when Darby in some measure relieved their worst fears by telling them what had happened, and that it was hoped, even believed, that the return of the tide in a few hours, would once more set them free without material damage. Of the possibility of being attacked by the pirate, whilst thus fettered, they happily knew not, nor of the ominous speed of the clouds above them; but Darby promised to bring them information from time to time.

Thus soothed, Mrs. Darcie's first words were of thankfulness for the watchful mercy of Pro-

vidence. Norah had still another source of consolation. She heard Herbert giving his orders calmly, and though she derived but little intelligence from his words, she felt her courage reviving, and her hopes supported by the firm, confident tone of his voice, so prone to falter when she was in danger. They arose, however, and prepared as well as they could for whatever should happen, with a firm trust in the overruling care of Heaven.

The darkness of the night, and the failure of their attempt to get close up to the pirate before dark, the two disappointments which officers and crew had so much deplored, proved to be really the very two circumstances which now constituted their only chance of security.

Whilst Herbert was carrying out the Captain's order, the Master was in the chains with the lead-lines in his hand.

"The tide is falling fast, sir," he said,

"Cut away the boom-lashings, Mr. Herbert,"

said the Captain; "Launch the heels of the topmast overboard, and shore up the ship. It's lucky the boats are out."

This important operation was quickly and skilfully performed. As much weight as possible was got down from aloft; the guns were run close in, and fresh water was started.

"Take the boats, Mr. Marliner, and with Mr. Yarker carry out the small bower-anchor in the same direction with the stream, and lay out a kedge-anchor, broad upon each bow."

They had barely time to accomplish all this, before the water had fallen sufficiently to have prevented it.

The ship now began to settle down forward, for she drew four feet less water forward than she did abaft, and the deck soon became an inclined plane, a steep ascent to those walking aft.

All possible preparations had been made for heaving the ship off into deep water, as soon as the tide should arise, and they had pumped

out part of the fresh water to lighten her. She had been so promptly and so efficiently shored up, that she sat perfectly upright upon the reef, and had as yet received no injury, though an anxious eye was cast occasionally in the direction in which the pirate had been last seen; and still more frequently upward, where the clouds flying rapidly over the face of the pale moon, still threatened them with a sudden gale.

Darby was now officially sent to inform the ladies of the nature of the accident, and to assure them that Captain Daunton hoped to be afloat again, and all right, in about four hours. They had necessarily been much agitated at all the inexplicable noises over head, being aware that the ship had grounded, but there had been no alarm on deck, no confusion; everything, however incomprehensible to them, had evidently been conducted with perfect coolness and regularity.

"Thank God, Herbert," said the Captain,

"the old ship is equally supported fore and aft; no broken back this time; and that rascal was too far off to see how it was with us. It's quite calm now, and as long as it remains so, he can't molest us; but I don't like the look of those clouds. Such a breeze as they have got would soon knock up a sea which would be destruction to us."

"I think there's not much chance of that now, sir; but had we not better keep the people employed, till they shall see that the tide is rising fast for us?"

"By all means. Turn the hands up to scrub the ship's bottom, and send the men over upon the reef with brooms and brushes."

"All hands scrub the ship's bottom," chaunted the Boatswain, winding his call. The Boatswain's mates repeated it, and the whole of the men, superintended by the officers, were soon in full work.

"Bear a hand, lads," said Herbert, as he descended upon the reef; "the tide will soon

flow, and with clean copper we shall be sure to catch that villain to-morrow."

The cheerful tone of Herbert, and the hope of catching the pirate, set the men to work as coolly as if there had been no question of the safety of the dear old Petrel and her precious freight.

"Sir," said Herbert, drawing the Captain aside, as he returned from walking round the ship upon the reef, "we have had a much narrower escape than we were aware of, for within half the ship's length, and right ahead of her, lie a cluster of sharp-pointed rocks, on which she must have bilged, had not the stream-cable checked her exactly as it did."

The tide rose rapidly, but Herbert took no notice of that. At length he heard,—

"We can't work here no longer, sir, the water is a-getting too deep."

This was what he had been anxiously awaiting. "Knock off work, knock off work, men," he shouted. "Scramble on board; throw off

your wet trousers, and tumble into your hammocks; I can only give you two hours."

Within five minutes every man was as fast asleep in his hammock as if the Petrel had been at her moorings in Portsmouth harbour. Old soldiers and sailors are always quick in this respect, and can sleep as much in two hours, if necessary, as most men can do in four.

Herbert having taken charge of the deck, sent everybody else below to get rest; he himself, meanwhile, walked up and down, and literally up and down, for it was now a hill side. Too happy was he to be alone, for he had the safety of far too dear an object at stake to have felt within himself all the confidence which he had so successfully inspired in others; and he still, from time to time, cast an anxious eye upwards, and almost shuddered to see the increasing velocity of the clouds above his head.

And Norah well knew whose light, firm,

elastic step it was, that thus paced above her. She felt that he had sent them all away, that he alone might watch over her, and enjoy his own thoughts; and well did she divine those thoughts. Gladly would she have told him, that she had no fears whilst he was her protector.

But rude realities ever break in upon delicious reveries, although dangers and anxieties have their own peculiar pleasure. Gradually Herbert's walk became more and more level; the vessel was afloat forward, and her bows rose rapidly to a level with her stern. The hawsers, however, attached to the kedge anchors, laid out upon each bow, kept her steadily in her position, or she might have struck the sharp rocks so near to her.

At length the Petrel swam once more upon an even keel; the boys and idlers, who had turned in early, were now summoned; shot cases, shot, and every portable article of any weight, were all removed to the forward end

of the ship; she gave one or two slight kicks and floated.

The stream cable had been hove taut; she sprang to it, and slackened it, and drew off as they hove upon it. The hands were turned up; and in a quarter of an hour the Petrel was riding to a bower anchor, in deep water, and by daylight there was no external mark to betray that she had been in difficulty.

But neither was there any pirate to make the discovery.

Bombay Jack came smiling up to Herbert, "Me tell you—him get shore, you catch he—spose you get shore, him get way, ha!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A HOT calm day succeeded the night in which they had extricated the ship from her very dangerous position, which they found at low water to be a sand-bank, with coral formations surrounding it. The bank itself was remarkably level, a circumstance to which they had been indebted for having escaped without any material strain or injury; but it was studded here and there with a clump of rugged sharp-pointed rocks, protruding from the sand, and forming, no doubt, the basis of the shoal,

upon which the sand had been washed up by tides and currents. From two of these rocky projections the Petrel had narrowly escaped wreck.

After breakfast, whilst all hands were busily employed with anchors and cables, and in reducing everything to order, preparatory to weighing with the first breeze; the Captain proposed to the ladies a walk upon this formidable reef, which now lay so quietly before them. It appeared to be about a mile in length, and about one-third of a mile in its greatest breadth, a hard fine sand bristling with sharp rocks, and abounding with shallow pools of transparent water. Danvers, who had accompanied them, drew their attention to one of the largest of these, glittering like glass, over a coral bottom.

"Look at this little grove of coral, Miss Darcie," he said. "Is it not curious?"

"It seems quite alive!" said Norah, in

astonishment; "a living stone plant, having branches studded with opening buds, and each of these appears to be continually expanding and contracting. It is equally beautiful and wonderful."

"It is indeed," interposed the Captain, "and I am delighted to see you so attentive to natural phenomena, and so prompt to admire what many overlook. Each bud, as you so aptly term it, does expand and contract visibly, and this becomes more strikingly obvious, even to a careless observer, because the expansion shows us a brighter and deeper colour, in the heart, as it were, of the bud, gradually subsiding into the pale tint of the outer edge."

"It is like a fairy grove," said Norah; "and one might imagine each rosy breathing palpitating bud to contain an imprisoned spirit. Had the Italian poet but seen a coral-grove, what a rich picture would he have

drawn of the victims of enchantment panting in their stony mansion."

"Your ideas are somewhat nearer truth than you imagine," said Daunton; "for each of these particles is a living animal—the coral insect, indefatigably labouring in its vocation, and constructing a stony cell, which is at once its mansion and its tomb." Then after a short pause he resumed—"Such, my dear young friend, are the mysterious ways of Providence, thus partially exposed to our observations, probably to show us with what puny agents Omnipotence may change the face of the world; for by these creatures, so weak and so minute, reefs and islands are in constant progress of formation. And by that simple act of contraction and expansion, which seems so objectless, and apparently so little calculated to produce important results,—whole seas are rapidly filling up."

They strolled on in silence, for Daunton's remarks had awakened serious reflections.

Emma, who had been rambling along the edge of the reef alone, now joined the party.

"I thought I should have found here some beautiful shells, like yours, Mr. Danvers," she said, "but I have not seen one."

"It is not on bare sand, or hard rocks, Emma," replied Danvers, "that we look for beautiful shells. They are delicate, and are only found in well-sheltered spots, where sea-weeds and earthy matter serve to conceal them, and perhaps to feed them. But see! here comes your friend Herbert."

The First Lieutenant now joined them, attended by one of the young Mids.

"We are quite ready, sir," he said to Captain Daunton; "I have left the boat's crew with a spare sail or two constructing a rude tent under the loftiest clump of rocks. As it is near noon, shall I send the boats on board for the crews to get their dinners?"

The Captain nodded assent, and the atten-

dant Middy departed with the necessary orders.

"I can't find any shells, Mr. Herbert," said Emma, rather complainingly.

"You will hardly meet with any here," said Herbert, "but I see yonder a spot where a large pool preserves communication with the sea. Its position is peculiarly sheltered, and so we may have a chance there."

The whole party proceeded towards the place. The rocks about it were of a slaty description, and slabs of various sizes were scattered about on the edge of the pool.

"Here," said the Captain, "you may find shells by turning over these slabs, which protect the delicate animal from violence in rough weather, and from the heat of the sun at low-water, affording them a cool, moist, and soft retreat at all times."

Herbert laid down a boarding pike which he always carried upon the reefs, as he had

frequently found opportunities of striking fish in the shallows, and turned over a thin slaty slab, under which several pretty shells were discovered, to Emma's great delight.

"Now, Miss Darcie," said Danvers, "which of these slabs shall we turn over for you?"

"Here is, I think, a very promising one," said Herbert.

"It's too large," said Norah; "you wont be able to turn that over. Try a smaller one."

But the three gentlemen having examined it, saw that as one of its ends was slightly elevated, they could get a good prize at it, and by a happy union of skill and strength, after two or three failures, they threw it over, when to their astonishment, they were confronted by a large ugly water-snake, about the thickness of a man's wrist, and perhaps eight feet long. Half of its length was perpendicularly raised, and its bright eyes glistened with rage, which

whether by mere chance, or attracted by her dress, was evidently directed towards Norah. Reared up in that menacing attitude, the brute seemed about to spring at her, when Herbert snatched up his pike, and by way of drawing the attention of the enraged reptile upon himself exclusively, struck it, but in his haste, so ineffectually, that the weapon glanced off the slippery skin, inflicting a wound more calculated to irritate than to disable it. Immediately it darted upon its assailant with great fury and agility; but Herbert, with his usual presence of mind, leaped on one side, and the ugly monster having missed its coup, turned and retreated for the water. Herbert, knowing the habits of the creature, was prepared for this, sprung forward, and dexterously striking his enemy through the neck with his pike, pinned him to the ground, just as Norah had rushed forward as if to shield him from danger. Danvers, with a large fragment of rock, broke

its spine; and thus rendered helpless, it was soon killed.

The whole contest had not lasted more than a minute, and as Daunton had thrown himself between the ladies and the combatants, as well as Danvers, they could but have had really a very imperfect view of the scene, which, however, so alarmed them that they had no longer any wish to explore the reefs; and retiring to the shelter of the tent, for the heat had become oppressive, the whole party found the refreshments which Daunton's considerate kindness had placed there, extremely acceptable.

Herbert would have returned to the scene of the encounter to procure shells for Norah, but she had no longer the slightest wish for any, and found means to make him remain where he was, without a formal protest against his purpose.

"Though you do not wish for shells," he said, "permit me to entreat your acceptance

of this," producing a remarkably beautiful harp-shell, "as a memorial of our adventures upon this reef." Norah felt that he alluded to her advance in aid. "I found it lying on its back in the very spot where the progress of the Petrel upon the reef had been so happily stayed. It must have been dislodged and thrown on shore by the violence of the wave raised by the sudden and forcible displacement of a body of water equal to the submerged portion of the Petrel's hull, and it lay within a few yards of the sharp projecting rock, which had so nearly been fatal to us."

Norah coloured highly as she accepted this simple but interesting present. With what circumstances of mutual peril, with what recollections of deep feeling, also mutual, was that simple shell connected; and although it could boast no intrinsic value, the harp-shell of the reef became at once to her a precious treasure. And well might it be cherished; for she could

at all times look at and admire it, without attracting notice or observation, whilst her warm heart could brood with secret pleasure upon the many interesting recollections of which it was the type and memorial.

Danvers examined the shell with the prying eye of a connoisseur.

"Permit me, Miss Darcie," he said, "to compare this harp-shell with some very beautiful specimens in my collection. There is, it strikes me," he added, "a peculiarity of form in this one, differing so materially from any of the same species which I have before seen, that I apprehend it constitutes a new variety. I will gladly give you the choice of my whole collection for it."

Poor Norah turned very pale, but Herbert came to the rescue.

"I dare say, Danvers, you think that I know and care nothing about shells, but rest assured that if this was not a very remarkable

specimen, I should not so gravely have offered it to Miss Darcie. It would in that case have been a very unworthy present, for though the class is beautiful, they are anything but rare. I offered it as an unique specimen, one which, however simple in itself, neither you nor any one else can more fully appreciate than I do; and I entreat you, Miss Darcie, on no account to part with it."

Norah looked grateful for this interference, which we must admit was not particularly clear and intelligible, and taking up her treasure, as if more than half afraid of losing it, the shell was seen no more.

"There is a breeze springing up from the southward, sir," said Herbert; "and here come the boats."

Our friends were not sorry to find themselves once more on board the Petrel, and the ladies descended into the cabin, seeing that preparations for weighing had commenced.

Captain Daunton stood upon the slide of a carronade whilst they hoisted up the boats, but in stepping down from it afterwards, not having perceived (for he was unhappily near-sighted) that the capstan-bars were laid along irregularly fore and aft the deck, he unluckily placed his foot upon a loose heap of them, and falling, sprained his ancle severely. He was forthwith condemned by Danvers to confinement upon a couch, in the deck-cabin.

As soon as the ship was under weigh, and all was once more quiet, the ladies came up to condole with their kind host, and to alleviate his imprisonment by their presence, for they all felt that regard for him which Emma expressed by calling him "Papa Daunton." Nor were his feelings towards the dear girls much less than paternal.

Steering towards the northward they ran along the east side of the reef, now so familiar. About three o'clock a strange sail was re-

ported from the mast-head, bearing North, North-West.

"Here we have the rascal again!" said the Captain; "I trust we shall catch him this time, but it is very hard upon me to be thus moored head and stern here, when one is dying to be free and on deck."

"I will soon tell you from the mast-head what she is, sir," said Herbert.

It was not doubted throughout the ship that the stranger was the pirate. Vessels were scarce in those seas, and this had appeared upon the very same bearing in which they had last seen her; and with their clean copper, they must be sure to outsail her now.

"A large ship upon a wind," reported Herbert from the mast-head, which was communicated by the officer of the watch to the Captain.

"That's very strange," said Daunton; "men-

of-war seldom come here, unless it may be occasionally a cruizer from the Cape like ourselves, and that it certainly is not."

But Herbert now entered the cabin with a very disconsolate face. "Sir," he said, "I think the stranger is a frigate. She is upon the starboard tack under all sail, and of course nears us fast. Her canvas is very white, but I am almost certain she is an English man-of-war."

"I did hope at first," said the Captain, "that it might be the rascal who got away from us last night. But who can she be? our ships don't return from India by this channel. Get the private signal-box, Herbert, and don't look so disappointed. We'll catch that fellow yet; depend upon it."

Norah saw clearly that Herbert's long face had nothing to do with the pirate, she suspected the truth, and whispered to Darby to go and learn what he could about the stranger

who was approaching them so rapidly. But Herbert, poor fellow, in his anxiety, was already again at the mast-head.

"Tell the Captain she is certainly an English man-of-war," he hailed. "I can't be mistaken in that now."

"What do you think of this stranger, Captain Daunton?" said Mrs. Darcie, who rarely troubled the Captain with questions, for which he said she was a wonder of a woman.

"I think, my dear madam, it must be one of our ships from India bound to the Cape on her way home; but it is a most unusual route for a homeward-bound ship to take."

"Should that be the case, my dear girls," rejoined the lady, "we may hope to hear of papa's arrival in India; and perhaps, Captain Daunton, the Captain of this frigate would be kind enough to relieve you from the inconvenience of so many passengers, and take us back to the Cape. But here comes Mr. Herbert."

"She is a small frigate, sir," he said, "and if you please, we will show our number. The wind is getting light, but as we are steering towards each other, we shall soon be within signal."

"It is the Brilliant, sir," said Herbert, entering the cabin ten minutes after. "But it is almost calm."

"The Brilliant!" repeated Daunton; "why that's my old friend, Sir Edward Barham. You know him well, Mrs. Darcie, and I have no doubt Lady Barham is with him."

"I have often met them both," she said, "and they are old friends of the Colonel, and will have seen him recently."

Whilst this discourse proceeded, Herbert was evidently more disconcerted than he had been, when the Petrel had been upon the reef; for this was a blow which he saw no means of warding off. It was such a horrible piece of ill-luck. He had never before

heard of a man-of-war homeward-bound, taking the Mozambique Channel, but it was like his luck—it would not have happened to any one else.

It was a strange source of consolation, but he did derive no inconsiderable solace from Norah's looking a little unhappy too. It seems like a paradox, yet was it both trite and natural.

"When do you think we shall be able to communicate with Sir Edward?" asked Mrs. Darcie of Herbert, for with all her habitual politeness and self-command, she could not but be impatient for a communication, from which she had so much to hope.

"The Brilliant is now about three miles from us," replied Herbert; "and there is not much probability that we shall have wind enough to carry us considerably nearer to her at present, but there will be no difficulty in sending a boat."

"It will be quite impossible for me to go, Mr. Herbert," said the Captain, "to wait upon my superior officer; you must therefore prepare to do so, and offer my excuses. You can tell Sir Edward how matters stand here, and the sooner you go the better."

Herbert had all along been aware that it must be so, and yet he listened to his Captain's decision, as if it had been his death warrant.

"It's very hard," he muttered to himself, as he dressed for this official visit, "that the Captain's accident should fall so much heavier upon me than upon himself; but this is altogether an ill-omened day."

The fact was, that Herbert, who felt that the long apprehended separation was now inevitable, might, but for Daunton's accident, have hoped for an opportunity for a little conversation with Norah, in Daunton's absence, whilst Mrs. Darcie would have been engaged

in making her preparations for the remove. His last chance was now lost, and he was obliged to absent himself at so critical a moment. But there was no remedy, and he entered the cabin to receive his instructions.

Never had there been such a collection of grave faces in that cabin before, or anything approaching to it; but the causes of these sombre looks were as various, as the effect was uniform.

Mrs. Darcie was grave and anxious, because she expected to hear of her husband, and hoped to be able to return to the Cape in the Brilliant. Delay and uncertainty upon two such important points were trying.

The Captain was in the same mood, because he was laid up, and unable to wait upon his senior officer; and although he had many reasons for wishing to transfer his fair friends to the Brilliant, as he was in pursuit of a powerful and desperate enemy, he felt a strange reluc-

tance to part with them. Herbert could not conceal his vexation ; and even Norah looked disconcerted, but whether it was at the thought of the separation, or in mere kind-heartedness to the poor disconsolate-looking Herbert, we cannot presume to decide. And yet,—such an enigma is the best and purest of human hearts !—we conceive it to be more than probable, that she would under all the circumstances have been more unhappy, had Herbert been less so !

"Take young Darcie with you," said the Captain, after he had given Herbert his instructions, "and send him back immediately with whatever news or letters there may be for Mrs. Darcie."

An unexpected meeting with a ship attached to a different station is always an interesting occurrence, to which the monotony of a sea life gives great zest; but in this case, the event had been equally unexpected and important ;

Daunton had lost all hope of forwarding his passengers to India, and it had become painful to him to think of their being exposed to the rapidly approaching stormy season, so violent and dangerous in the Mozambique Channel, whilst the possibility of having them on board in a severe contest with the pirates was extremely painful to him.

Well may love be painted blind! The ancient masters knew human nature well; for Herbert, with all his clear-sighted good sense, and all his trembling anxiety to protect his much loved Darcies from the shadow of evil, had entirely overlooked these great and obvious dangers; whilst Daunton, to whom they could not be so dear, thought of nothing else.

But there is another point of view in which these sudden meetings in distant and little frequented seas, are worthy of remark. You catch a hasty glimpse of an old friend in the

Indian Ocean, whom you had left years before in London, in Malta, or at Jamaica. You talk over the squadrons to which you respectively belong; about deaths, promotions, and a vast variety of exploits and accidents in two different divisions of the globe; and you part, to meet again at Halifax or in the Baltic, or, probably, to meet no more. In thus rapidly skimming over the four quarters of the world, as if they had been part or parcel of a country or a county, there is something both elevating and exciting. We seem to span this great earth with so much ease and rapidity, by a sort of mental railroad, and are so familiarly acquainted with all its various climes, that self-sufficiency often becomes ludicrously inflated, and we forget that we are the puny, unstable creatures of a day.

It is wonderful to what an extent circumstances can lengthen or curtail the passing hour. Scarcely a word had been spoken in

the deck-cabin since Herbert's departure. All counted the minutes, but especially Mrs. Darcie, whose anxiety to hear of her husband was almost equalled by her anxiety to return to the Cape in the Brilliant.

"Surely," she exclaimed at length, "I hear the sound of oars."

Anxiety and hope deferred sharpen our perceptions wonderfully: she was not mistaken.

A few minutes after, Darby entered with a note from Lady Barham to Mrs. Darcie.

"Sir Edward," he said, addressing the Captain, "is sorry for your accident, sir, and will wait upon you and upon the ladies immediately. He is only staying to give some necessary instructions, under Mr. Herbert's advice, for the accommodation of my mother and sisters; and he hopes to receive them to-morrow morning."

Lady Barham's note ran thus:—

"My dear Mrs. Darcie,

"It is long since we last met at dear Danbury Park; and I am enchanted to have you and your dear girls with us. We shall have much to talk of; for I was at Bombay when the Colonel arrived, and saw him frequently. Never did I see him looking better. When we left Bombay, six weeks ago, he was expecting the command of a brigade,—and still more anxiously hoping for your arrival. About ten days since, on our passage from the Red Sea, we met a vessel much more recently from India, from which we got a newspaper for an hour. The Brevet was in it; which having been much more extensive than had been expected, I think we shall find Major-General Darcie at the Cape, on his way to England, waiting for news of you,—as he will not have found you still there. Barham, who will be with you immediately, will give you particulars. I look forward to seeing you here,

with your dear girls, to-morrow, with great delight.

Believe me to remain,

My dear friend,

Yours affectionately,

ELLEN BARHAM.

"P.S.—Tell our old acquaintance, Captain Daunton, that he must forgive us for robbing him of his charming guests. Your friend, Mr. Herbert, looked very gloomy at first, and was in great haste to get back to you, till Barham consulted him about the arrangements for your accommodation here, when he entered into the subject con amore, and is displaying much taste and judgment. And yet I cannot help suspecting that the subject is painful to him. His countenance tells tales sadly.

"Send me one line by Barham. Norah must be quite a young woman now,—tant pis, ma chère, for you and me.

"E. B."

"Thank God," said Norah, from the bottom of her heart, as soon as she had read the note; "we are not to go to India after all. I never liked the prospect of going there; and for some time past I have not been able to endure the thought of it."

"I should rejoice at it, too, my love," said the mother, "but that I fear your father will be much disappointed. He has been so long looking forward to the advantages of an Indian command, that I fear he will consider his promotion a misfortune."

"The Brilliant's boat is coming, sir," reported the officer of the watch.

And soon after Sir Edward Barham entered the cabin with Herbert. He was a middle-aged agreeable man, with a frank easy address; and as soon as mutual recognitions had passed, he addressed Mrs. Darcie.

"You have had from your old acquaintance Ellen an outline of the information we bring;

and you well know how delighted we shall be to receive you. Daunton must reconcile himself to the loss as best he may. It was too much good fortune for an old bachelor to enjoy your society so long. Norah will hardly recollect me; and I certainly should not have recognised my old playfellow."

"Were there any further particulars in the newspaper you saw, Sir Edward, relative to this unexpected extension of the Brevet? I fear Darcie will have been greatly disappointed by being included in it, as it will throw him out of employment, and separate him from his darling regiment."

"There was an unofficial paragraph, remarking that two old and distinguished Colonels, serving with their regiments in India, would be sufferers by their promotion; and suggesting that both should be employed forthwith,—and Darcie was no doubt one of the officers alluded to," replied Sir Edward, who having

answered a variety of inquiries from Mrs. Darcie, entered into conversation with Captain Daunton: a circumstance of which Herbert, who had been delivering a few more last words from Lady Barham, skilfully availed himself, by suggesting, sotto voce, that the two Commanders should be left for a professional conference; the propriety of which was so obvious that the ladies instantly arose.

"I was longing exceedingly for a little air and exercise," observed Norah. "All these changes, coming so rapidly one after the other, quite bewilder me."

"Please, madam," said Andrews, approaching his mistress respectfully, "Susan wants your orders about several things, as we are to remove to-morrow morning—for so Mr. Darby tells her."

This appeal was unanswerable; and Mrs. Darcie, on household cares intent, descended to the cabin, leaving Norah, under Herbert's

escort, to take the exercise and fresh air she so much needed. We do not exactly know what ailed our sweet girl at the moment, but the leading symptom was an extreme disinclination to go below.

Here then, notwithstanding all his grumbling, did fortune once more favour Frank Herbert; who was precisely the sort of young fellow to whom the fickle goddess is wont to dispense kicks and cuffs without mercy, mingled with occasional smiles of the most fascinating description, amply repaying him for all his sufferings, real or imaginary.

"If you must leave us," said Herbert, "it is some consolation that you are not going on to India; and yet," he added, "why should I be so selfish? Pardon me; but the suddenness of this separation, when I felt quite assured that no such opportunity could occur, has almost disturbed my reason."

"How long do you think it will be before you return to the Cape?" said Norah.

"A month—six weeks—an age," he replied. "And you will have sailed for England," he added, despondingly; "but I can follow you. Norah," he resumed, in a subdued tone, "if you would save me from madness, promise me that you will avoid all engagements till I am in a condition to make proposals. I am well born, and not without a moderate inheritance. These things will plead for me with the General. Your kind mother knows how devotedly I love you; I think I should have a friend in her. If you can find it in your heart to sanction my pretensions, I will defy all other difficulties." He stopped, in a state of painful agitation.

It was a bright starlight night, with a light air of wind; the young couple leaned over the taffrail of the ship; no one was nearer to them than the officer and Midshipman of the

watch, who were conversing on the foremost part of the quarter-deck. The Brilliant lay at a short distance, the only object in sight upon the face of the sparkling, glittering waters.

Norah was silent, perhaps sad; there was an unquestionable sympathy of feeling, which required not words to make itself understood.

"Behold," he said, "the vessel waiting to bear you from us. When and where shall we meet again? Give me, I beseech you, one word of hope, to support me under this cruel separation. I was not prepared for it, Norah."

The sweet girl was deeply affected. All that Herbert had done and suffered for her, his noble qualities, his amiable disposition, and above all, the deep devotion of his manly, truthful heart, pleaded for him, as did, perhaps, a friend within the garrison. She raised her head gently, her tears flowed fast, but she had not power to speak.

A well-known footstep approached; it was Andrews—a summons, unquestionably, to attend her mother. One instant only remained to her; and there stood Herbert, in breathless anxiety, awaiting the word which was to decide his fate for happiness or misery.

"Let us live in hope, Herbert," said the agitated girl. And she was gone.

CHAPTER IX.

Mrs. Darcie gladly accepted the kind invitation pressed upon her by the Barhams, and wrote a reply to Lady Barham's note.

Sir Edward assured her that he had little doubt of their finding the General at the Cape, as he would have had every reason to believe that he could reach that colony before his family could have left it. The accidental opportunity of taking a passage by the Thames so late in the season, being a thing quite out

of the usual routine, General Darcie would of course, almost immediately after his arrival, have heard of their capture, and happily at the same time of their rescue, from Captain Timmins and Mr. Chartres, as the Fra Diavolo must have arrived nearly as soon as himself; he would consequently be anxiously expecting the return of the Petrel from her cruize.

"Your arrival with us, therefore," continued Sir Edward, "will be a most agreeable surprise, and will relieve him at once from all his anxieties. What do you say to going on to England with us? I must make some little stay at the Cape, and we shall have plenty of time to complete all our arrangements. Think seriously of this. We trust to see you and the girls early in the morning." With this he took leave, and returned to the Brilliant.

Mrs. Darcie was now much gratified that she had written so long and so circumstantial an account of their adventures to her friend

Mrs. Vaughan, by Chartres, as it would give her husband so much interesting information, and fully explain their situation on board the Petrel; whilst Chartres, who had been so highly spoken of in that letter, would have received from him the acknowledgments so justly his due.

Meantime preparations were making in both ships for removal in the morning.

"I don't know what we shall do without you, Mrs. Darcie," said Captain Daunton, as he rashly, in his restlessness, limped a turn or two on the deck, notwithstanding his sprained ancle; "we shall certainly be very dull when you have left us, and cross too, I fear."

"Nay, my dear sir," replied the lady, "your kindness has borne with us, and you have, from rendering us important services, come to regard us with interest, for which we are truly grateful. I have feared that you must have been sadly inconvenienced by quitting your cabin

for us. I only hope we shall soon have the pleasure of receiving you at the Cape."

The Captain had an especial horror of thanks and compliments, and the lady had no love for them; so that the usual summons to the tent was a relief to both.

Daunton was quite out of spirits, and in some pain; Mrs. Darcie much pre-occupied; Herbert and Norah were in no talkative mood. No guests had been invited; all felt painfully that this would be the last of those little meetings hitherto so cheerful, and from which each had derived so much pleasure. No one had the courage to attempt conversation. To the young people the last twenty-four hours had been deeply agitating;—that inevitable separation on the morrow was dreaded, and they both thought themselves very unhappy, and indeed looked so.

But it would appear that their unhappiness must have been of a very peculiar kind,—a

sort of misery which seemed to carry its own antidote with it. There was, in fact, a sombre satisfaction lurking beneath, and even traceable in the expression of their countenances, which, more especially when their eyes met, implied that, unhappy as they were, they would not exchange their misery for the happiness of others.

All felt the unusual silence to be oppressive. Yet only one attempt was made to break it, when the Captain, who derived little pleasure from his own thoughts, observed that it was a fine evening.

Fortunately, at this moment, the band of the Brilliant struck up Sweet Home, greatly to the relief and delight of our party, and not the less so from being wholly unexpected, as they had not been aware that the frigate carried a band, which was very far from a matter of course.

"Herbert," said the Captain, "take the

ladies on deck. They will hear the music better, and it will add greatly to the pleasure of a walk. I am suffering for my foolish attempt to walk too soon, or I should enjoy it much. Do try it, Mrs. Darcie."

"I will stay with you, my dear sir," replied the lady; "and indeed I have much to say to you. I think a walk will be good for Norah, and she will enjoy it; but pray, Mr. Herbert, come in, if the dew should be very heavy."

This was indeed a welcome charge—an unhoped-for piece of good fortune, and Herbert's spirits rose almost to extasy, as thus authorized, he placed Norah's arm within his own, and forgot for the moment all the impending horrors of separation.

"Little did I dream of such happiness as this," he murmured gently to his fair companion, as they stepped the deck together, somewhat more lightly and quickly than usual, under the influence of a lively waltz.

Never does music sound so softly, so sweetly, as when it flows over the smooth face of gently heaving waters; but there are moral as well as material influences, which aid the power of harmony; and when, under these favouring circumstances, the lively measure was succeeded by a sweet and plaintive air, it would be difficult to describe the sensation of pleasure with which our unworldly favourites listened, as they unconsciously marked the measure with their light footsteps.

Few words, and softly spoken, passed between them; perhaps they feared to interrupt that floating melody which they loved and shared. But, whatever the cause, the effect of their remarks, brief and few as they were, were certainly soothing to both. It was indeed an hour of happiness, though not unmingled with apprehensions, amidst subsequent perils and sorrows, and disappointments, remembered fondly, and regarded as

a bright redeeming spot, which might keep hope alive.

Why should such precious moments fly so rapidly? The close of the National Anthem recalled the rapt lovers to tame realities.

They re-entered the tent cabin, as Daunton and Mrs. Darcie were conversing.

"We are indeed amazed, my dear madam," was the remark of Daunton, "when we reflect upon the infallibility of Providence; for whilst man frets and fumes, and parades his puny stock of sagacity and experience, vainly striving to foresee or to influence future events, his Maker works all things for the best, in his own mysterious and unerring ways. The various delays and disappointments of the Petrel, so much lamented by us at the time,—the judicious measures taken by your friends in the Thames, to beat off and elude the pirates, seemed only to have thrown you more cer-

tainly into their hands; yet, these very things, by God's blessing, not only saved you, but, by leading to the destruction of those wretches, have doubtless saved others too. We sailors endure much and see much, in our strange and roving life; and thus behold the works and ways of Providence more distinctly, and upon a larger scale than other men. Indeed, an irreligious seaman must be either utterly devoid of perception and reflection, or must wantonly and perversely close his eyes and ears to the goodness and power of God, which else he must feel to be equally unlimited and gracious. But here is my young friend returned. I little thought I should ever feel so severely the loss of any one; but for the first time in my life I am superstitious, and something whispers me that we may never see her again. But, come, Herbert, do not let our guests feel their last evening to be dull and gloomy, though I may be so."

Herbert's glance at Norah brought a bright flush into her fair cheek.

Though the inevitable separation so close at hand could not but weigh heavily upon the party, Daunton, in fact, appeared to feel it most, notwithstanding that he was little accustomed to be affected by changes of any sort, or at least to betray such a feeling. He was now out of spirits beyond all former precedent, so much so, indeed, as to begin to attract the attention of Herbert and Norah. He moved restlessly in his seat, as if suffering from some mental conflict.

"My dear sir," said Norah, as she took a seat near him, "the thought of leaving you thus suddenly, after all your kindness to us, is very distressing to me. But as we are not going to India, I console myself with the thought that we shall soon see you at the Cape, the guest of my dear father. I long to see you together, and to

tell him what a father you have been to Emma and me."

Daunton smiled, but shook his head despondingly. All were surprised to see the settled gloom which so evidently oppressed him, and Norah was quite alarmed.

"My dear child," he said, taking her hand, "I feel that I shall never see you again. You will deem this a weak and idle fancy, unbecoming my age;—I know it is open to such interpretation. Yet, strange as it may appear, the conviction that we part to meet no more is indelibly fixed in my mind. I shall never see you again."

Herbert was astounded at this burst of superstitious feeling from his calm, firm, even-minded old captain; it seemed almost awful. Herbert was young, and knew not as yet that these cold, reserved, and apparently indifferent men, often possess deep and strong feeling.

Norah, with his aid, succeeded to a con-

siderable degree in giving a more rational, if not a more cheerful direction to Daunton's thoughts, which had well-nigh affected themselves. He rallied, and reminded Mrs. Darcie that she would be disturbed very early in the morning.

Mrs. Darcie had been for some time too much occupied with her own thoughts to take much interest in anything else. The growing attachment between Norah and Herbert, which she could not prevent, and could scarcely condemn, was a source of painful anxiety to her, whilst she saw it continually increasing, under the influence of daily familiar intercourse. She felt that they were admirably qualified to ensure each other's happiness, and could not but bear in mind all that they owed to Herbert, while she fully appreciated his many fine qualities. But she saw great—perhaps, insuperable difficulties, to be overcome, before such a union could meet the father's appro-

bation; and she trembled for the happiness of her high-minded, warm-hearted girl, whose amiable and affectionate disposition had so wholly won her heart.

We have already said that the General had ambitious views for his daughter, which had been fostered by the admiration she had excited whilst yet almost a child. He could ill brook that even those nearest and dearest to him should venture to thwart his views, and had never been accustomed to it. He had little fortune to give to his daughters, and was not partial to the members of Herbert's profession; still he was a liberal, open-hearted, and honourable man, and fond of his children.

All this, and very much more, bearing unfavourably upon this unfortunate attachment, had the affectionate mother anxiously considered. She felt, too, that in its progress it would involve herself in much trouble and perplexity. Yet could she not condemn it,

for the heart of woman, when not corrupted or debased, is essentially generous, and above all unselfish, where the interests of those dear to it are concerned.

Norah, she was well assured, would never act in defiance of her father's will, but it was equally certain that her sensitive nature would sink under any undue exertion of paternal authority upon so vital a subject. One slender source of hope remained to her.

The General would fully appreciate their manifold obligations to Herbert, and would be delighted by the fearless courage to which they owed so much. And widely as the personal character and disposition of Norah's father and her lover might differ in many respects, the same romantic gallantry, the same generous uncompromising devotion to duty, the same appreciation of merit in others, were common to both, proving that the basis of their

character was much more congenial than its superstructure, which so many circumstances had combined to vary. Under favourable circumstances, indeed, General Darcie would doubtless conceive a high regard for Herbert, which might tend to reconcile him to an attachment formed upon no light or trivial grounds for an object so worthy; for he loved his daughter, was proud of her, and had no mean opinion of her taste and judgment.

Mrs. Darcie's position had long been a very painful one. Unwilling to sanction a growing connexion, which she had but too much reason to believe would greatly displease her husband, she was far more unwilling to expose her loved daughter,—so confiding, so pure-minded,—to all the painful uncertainties and heart-breaking anxieties of a half-avowed attachment, and an implied engage-

ment,—the most painful and humiliating position in which a generous-minded girl can be placed, when, by unforeseen circumstances, parted from the object of her preference,—possibly to meet no more. It was after long and serious reflection on this point, that Mrs. Darcie had resolved to permit the avowed completion of an engagement so fraught with untoward circumstances.

There had been no intentional concealment on Norah's part, nor any abatement of her habitual confidence in the mother, whom she almost idolized; and if the subject had never been mentioned, it was only because the innocent girl did by no means clearly comprehend her own position, or perceive whither circumstances were so rapidly hurrying her.

But now that the die was cast, and that she had pledged her faith, when she had, at the direct instance of her mother, so suddenly

and so unexpectedly, on the very eve of separation, been exposed to his earnest and moving solicitations, she began to reproach herself severely in having taken such a step without the knowledge of her mother; and no sooner did she find herself alone with her, than she threw herself into Mrs. Darcie's arms, and disclosed with tears what had occurred.

"Do not grieve, my darling," said the mother affectionately, "you have no cause for self-reproach. I have seen for some time the danger of this attachment; and if circumstances had permitted, I would gladly have prevented it, as I fear it may be deemed objectionable by your papa. But I still believe Herbert to be worthy of you. It would have been better to have shunned the trials and difficulties which will now most probably be entailed on you both; but my affection for you,—and I will add, my regard for Herbert,

—induce me to sanction an engagement I could not prevent. And I will share with you, my darling, whatever sad consequences may happen."

Norah could only cling closer to her bosom.

"This, my child, is the very moment of your life when a mother's love, a mother's care, will be most indispensable to you," resumed Mrs. Darcie; "and I will not desert you. I will be your confidant and your adviser in the difficult path which a strange concurrence of circumstances, far beyond our control, has forced you to follow. And now, supported by entire faith in Herbert, and by your mother's sanction, you must wait with patience for more favourable circumstances."

Norah, overcome by this maternal tenderness, and relieved from a thousand indefinite apprehensions, as well as from all self-reproach,

could not find words to utter her thanks, but they were better expressed by tears. She knew in part the nature of the sorrows which her mother had anticipated, and felt the full value of her generous promise to share them. And had not she spoken also in the highest terms of Herbert? That was another source of consolation, of courage, of hope!

CHAPTER X.

It was a sad parting on the morrow, and there was not a man or a boy in the old Petrel who did not feel it in some measure. Many a blessing was bestowed upon our fair friends as the flag-covered chair, which conveyed them one by one over the ship's side, was gently lowered into the barge lying at the gangway to receive them.

But if these feelings had prevailed before the mast, what was to console poor Herbert?

He had found means to seek and to obtain Norah's consent that he should plead his own cause with Mrs. Darcie, and from that lady had learned what difficulties he must expect to encounter.

"One long month," he whispered to the pale girl, "and then we may meet again."

Scarcely had the party reached the Brilliant, when a breeze sprang up, and the frigate hauled her wind to the southward under all sail; and the Petrel bore up for Zanzibar in a contrary direction.

"'Tis sad work parting with such friends, Herbert," said the Captain; "but we must comfort ourselves with the hope of getting hold of that rascally pirate. He is heavily armed; and the presence of ladies in a desperate fight would have been a painful source of anxiety. Moreover, in a vessel like this, there is no secure place for them."

Herbert seemed to draw some consolation from this view of the case, and was much gratified by Daunton's sympathy.

"I presume, sir," he said, "if we capture this pirate, you will return to the Cape at once?"

"Certainly, and most gladly too; for in the continued gales and fogs which will soon prevail here, we shall have desperate work of it. But, thank God! our friends will not be exposed to all this."

These considerations had their full weight with Herbert, who found much to congratulate himself upon in his future prospects; and when attacked by fits of despondency, there were now bright specks in the past which were inexpressibly cheering. So he plunged into the innumerable details of a First Lieutenant's province, which certainly have no romance about them.

The poor Seccalava had lost in Manoel, who returned in the Brilliant, the only person with whom he could at all converse. Bombay Jack and he beheld each other with deep aversion; for the Seccalavas frequently plundered Joanna in overwhelming numbers, and Jack hated them. No one else could understand the poor fellow, who, it must be owned, was by no means sociably inclined.

"I wish you would speak to that poor Madagascar man sometimes, and do what you can for him, now Manoel's gone," said Herbert to the new pilot.

"Him Seccalava man—bad man him," replied the Joannese; "him bad, cruel man, bery."

The repugnance to communication was mutual; and whenever they met, they scowled at each other furiously, though poor Jack on such occasions looked more than a little frightened.

"'Tis very odd, sir," observed Darby Darcie to Herbert, "but that strange fellow Chou-chow has always been particularly civil to the Seccalava man; and how they manage it, I don't know, but I am convinced that they do, to a certain extent, understand one another."

"Of course, Darby; they both speak Irish naturally, you know. But, joking apart, I am glad to hear this. Encourage it; for we must find means of making the man who saved us both some return, if we can but discover how to do it."

Amongst other changes wrought on board the Petrel by recent events, was a great improvement in the midshipman's berth, which, under the control of old Grogson, had been sadly let down. Darby and Tandy, as fighting characters, had made rapid progress towards manhood, in their own estimation; and their

new associate, Mr. Yarker, whilst he did not presume to attempt any control over them, and did perhaps, in some respects, look up to them, held Grogson in great contempt. Indeed the poor fellow was fast sinking into that state of habitual inebriety which destroys both mind and body.

Mrs. Darcie had given Darby some cases of crockery and other domestic treasures, and various things saved from the Thames contributed largely to the comfort and respectability of their establishment, which were further supported by an excellent store of edibles. Yarker, moreover, had brought some useful things with him; and his habits of order and regularity were so much to their taste, that the boys had wisely resolved to dethrone Grogson, who was so unworthy of rule, and to elect King Yarker. Somers made a slight show of resistance in favour of his old friend; but soon found

it necessary to acquiesce, for he had not an atom of influence.

"Well, Darby," said Mr. Tandy, sentimentally, "it's a horrid bore to have lost the ladies. I don't feel like the same man, though I confess it is a pity Emma should be so fond of that brute of a monkey."

"I don't think she cared about the monkey," replied Darby; "but she loves mischief, and did it to vex you; and certainly, to see a smart young fellow like you jealous of a monkey was right good fun."

Tandy, disliking this turn of the conversation, suddenly recollected that Somers was upon deck, waiting to be relieved, at which his friend chuckled.

"Come here, Chouchow," said Darby; "you are the fellow I want. You are often now with that Seccalava, who never looks at any other man; can you contrive in any way to understand each other?"

"Not much, master; he's no great talker," replied Chou; "and yet there's some good in him too."

"I have reason to say so, for he saved my life."

"No thanks to the nigger for that, master; he would not have put out his finger to save you. It was only when he saw Mr. Herbert in danger, that he went overboard; and if you had not, luckily for you, clung fast to Mr. Herbert, he would not have troubled himself about you."

"How do you know that, Chou; or how can you understand his ways or his speech? Tell me that, Mr. Chouchow."

"Master not know half Chou's story," said Chouchow, laughing. "I was once a prisoner to the Madagasses, not to this man's tribe; still I can understand him pretty well. But master must not tell."

"You may trust me, Chou; but is your Madagascar friend to be trusted?"

"Yes, according to what he thinks his duty, but not one inch farther. Mr. Herbert gave him his life, and he will risk it to save or to please Mr. Herbert; but don't you trust that Seccalava man, master."

"I want you, Chou, to find out, how we can best repay him for having saved our lives."

"He was bound by his notions to save Mr. Herbert, but had no wish to save you; so you owe him nothing."

"Still he did save me, and I wish to repay him."

"Send him back to Madagascar, then, and give him half-a-dozen stout slaves to carry home with him. He'll be rich then."

"That we cannot do, Chou; but anything else."

"There's no other way, master; and s'pose you tell him 'can't do that,' he would be in a great rage; he would say, 'Ah, dam white man! he promise everything, never give nothing, always say, 'can't do that.'' He expects nothing now, so let him alone, master."

"Queer people these, Chou. How did you like to be amongst them?"

"Not at all, master. I was seized by them and was made a slave for almost two years, till I ran away, and got on board a French ship at St. Mary's. The Frenchmen would not believe at first that I was a white man, but I satisfied them at last; and, like me, they didn't fancy the queer ways of the Madagasses."

"They do say, Chou, that you have some queer ways."

"Yes, master, everybody have queer ways; and s'pose master not take care, young Mr.

Somers get Mr. Grogson's queer ways;—but there's seven bells striking."

And away flew Chouchow, leaving Darby to chew the cud upon more than one piece of useful information—that was Chou's queer way.

"It is time," said Darby to Mr. Yarker, who now entered the berth, "that something should be done to save that disagreeable boy Somers. He is constantly sitting with old Grogson, who is himself never drunk because he is never sober; whilst Somers, who is a very sneaking skulking chap, has fifty ways of escaping observation. It's a disgrace to the berth."

It was subsequently resolved by Yarker and his two young friends, to lay the whole case before Herbert, as their own remonstrances had produced no effect.

On that same evening, Grogson, who was much more intoxicated than usual, displayed

his jealousy of Yarker with so much violence, and was so loud and troublesome, that Herbert's attention was drawn to him as he passed down the ladder towards the gun-room. The sudden appearance of the First-Lieutenant on the spot frightened Grogson almost into sobriety; but he was immediately placed in arrest, and carried off to his hammock.

In the morning, Herbert reported the case to the Captain. They had both long seen that it must come to this. Grogson had at one time been a useful man, but unfortunately, when Midshipmen were not to be procured, he had been raised by a former Captain to a post for which he was wholly unfit; and which, by giving him access to spirits, had completely ruined him. It had become necessary to get him out of the ship; but in the opinion of Herbert and Daunton, he was almost as much to be pitied as blamed.

About 11 on that sad morning, Grogson had what he called a "splitting headache," caused not so much by what he had drunk the night before, as by the want of a dram or two in the morning, which he had long been accustomed to take instead of breakfast, but which, now that he was under restraint, he could not procure. He had, moreover, a confused and most disagreeable sort of recollection of having seen the First-Lieutenant's face overnight, and a full assurance that he was in arrest.

"How did it all happen, Dick?" he stammered out to his friend Somers. "I suppose that fellow Yarker will say I was drunk, but you know better than that. You'll stand by me, I know."

"Please Mr. Grogson you are wanted in the Captain's cabin," said the messenger boy.

Poor Grogson became so red in the face that the hue of his nose was no longer stri-

kingly conspicuous. The thought of facing the Captain was quite awful to old Grogson, who had long kept out of sight as much as possible, for reasons good. To enter his cabin under any circumstances would be a most severe trial, but to stand face to face there, with his angry chief, alone, and as a delinquent, was terrible. The culprit stopped under the half-deck just outside the cabin door, in a sad state of heat and perplexity, twirling round a limp, dilapidated hat.

The cabin bell close to him rang with that sharp twang which tells you clearly that the ringer thereof is in wrath. This was not lost on Grogson, whose nerves had become very sensitive.

"The Captain is waiting for you, Mr. Grogson," said the sentinel, who had answered the bell, and who at the same time set the cabin door wide open for him. Farther delay was

impossible, and one only hope remained—it was his last reserve, and he brought it forward boldly.

Always a good-humoured and inoffensive man, he was blessed with a sort of Parthian wit which had often stood him in great stead in the various little difficulties which his unfortunate propensity to grog-drinking continually brought upon him. He was accustomed to escape, by striking down his antagonist when in the full career of victory, and effectually disarming him with some ridiculously quaint excuse. His countenance had always naturally bordered on the grotesque, and his features being now swollen by inebriety, and highly coloured, it required little effort on his part to produce a ludicrous expression heightened by a pair of watery, lack-lustre eyes, to such a degree, that when added to his assumed air of excessive timidity, it was

scarcely possible to sustain serious anger against him.

Compelled to enter the dreaded domain of Daunton, he stopped short just within its entrance in a state of trepidation, half real and half feigned. He looked back, but the door was already closed upon him.

The Captain, seeing no prospect of his advancing a single step farther, walked up to him in a very angry manner.

"So sir, you were drunk sir, last night; noisy and quarrelsome too! A very pretty example to set. But I will make an example of you."

"No, indeed I warn't drunk, sir," stammered out the accused, keeping his eyes fixed on the deck, as if afraid to look up. "I might be a sheet in the wind, sir, I won't deny it; but 'tis very hot work in the hold, sir. I was tired and thirsty, sir; but indeed I warn't to say drunk, sir."

"Not drunk, sir," replied the Captain sternly; "I say you were drunk, very drunk, sir!"

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I warn't nothing like to say drunk. Ask Mr. Somers, sir."

"Pray, Mr. Grogson," demanded the irritated Commander, "what may be your notion of a man being drunk?"

Matters were now at the precise point for which old Grogson had been working; and he rallied all his energies and collected all his maudlin wits. He knew the innate kindness of Daunton, and screwing up his queer old face into a ludicrous expression of humility and compunction, while he stole a sly glance to ascertain whether he might venture to have recourse to his usual trick, he replied meekly, and with much affectation of honesty and simplicity:

"Why, sir, I call a man drunk, sir, when he tumbles down, and lays hold of

the ringbolts for fear he should tumble up again."

Impertinent as this may appear to the reader, so inimitably humble and ludicrous and natural were the tone and manner with which it was spoken that Daunton was beaten out of his gravity altogether.

"Go along, sir! get out of my cabin, sir! Go, go!" was all he could say; and old Grogson, too happy to take him at his word, rushed out, tumbling over the sentinel, who was listening at the door, and flew down into the berth, where he gave the whole scene with so much spirit that it produced roars of laughter.

But poor Grogson was still in arrest, and Somers was prohibited, upon pain of being introduced to the gunner's daughter, from holding any communication with him; whilst effectual measures were taken to prevent

either of them from getting spirits, though Danvers soon found himself obliged to prescribe a considerable dose of rum for Grogson, who would have sunk under a total deprivation.

After a long and tedious passage, from frequent calms, the Petrel made Zanzibar without having seen a vessel of any kind. The anchorage at this place is sheltered, but so surrounded with reefs and small islands, that, but for the transparency of the water, it would be impossible for strangers to enter it. The pilot was not familiar with the roadstead, but Captain Daunton, anxious to pick up information about the pirate, which he expected to do here, as there was much trade, and small vessels were continually coming and going, and being also desirous to procure a supply of fresh water, as so much had been started when the ship was on the

reef, determined to go in. By sending boats a-head to act as buoys, and by a vigilant look-out aloft, the Petrel was with great difficulty, and after several narrow escapes from grounding, anchored off the town, and Herbert was sent to announce who she was, and what was her object.

"Well, Herbert," said the Captain, on his return, "what do you make of these people?"

"Plenty of fine words, sir," he replied. "The Governor sends his compliments, and assures you that everything in the island is at your command; but he says there are few, if any, cattle, and very little stock of any kind. His interpreter is clearly unfriendly to us, and so, I believe, is the Governor himself, with all his grand professions."

"Here comes Marliner," observed the Captain, "who has been to examine the

watering-place which Bombay Jack pointed out. Well, Mr. Marliner, what is your report?"

"I found a beautiful stream of water, sir, where we could complete in a few hours, and the natives, eager for trade, brought down poultry and fruit in abundance, and promised to bring down plenty of cattle in the morning; but all at once they disappeared."

"How's this, pilot?" said Daunton. "You must have seen or heard something about this?"

"People good people, sir; have plenty ebery ting. Gobernor he bad man; he send 'em all away. Dey tell me, Samé, him interpreter, bery bad man; he do all de mischief he can."

"That's the very rascal, sir, that I told you of. Let me take Bombay Jack with me. He will understand what the fellow

says, and will interpret faithfully for us," said Herbert.

The result of Herbert's remonstrance was, that the order forbidding the natives to trade with the Petrel was recalled; but it was evident that there was much ill-will to the British flag.

"Herbert," said the Captain, "we must get what we can from this fellow. We have permission to water, and he has promised me a pilot for these islands. He will certainly throw every possible obstacle in our way, and delay us with promises that mean nothing; but these fellows have no idea of rapid movements. Get all ready to-night, and before day-break commence watering; and, as there will be no necessity for getting the casks out of the boats, we may get all we want before he sees what we are about."

This was done; and when a messenger ar-

rived at the watering-place, about a mile from the town, to forbid the officers to go on watering, under pretence that the Governor intended to send a supply in his own boats, to save trouble, they had done their work.

Again all supplies were stopped, and it was evident that there was a strong feeling of hostility to the English. About two in the afternoon Bombay Jack picked up a report, from the natives, that a large armed vessel had put into an island about ten leagues to the northward.

"This old rascal," said Captain Daunton to his First Lieutenant, "is in league with the pirates, and probably receives their plunder. Go, therefore, Herbert, and demand an interview. Tell him of his breach of faith and of hospitality, in preventing the natives from bringing off supplies; which shall be properly represented at Muscat to his master, and demand the pilot he promised, that we may seek

provisions elsewhere; for I must find out what the ship they speak of is."

The colours of the Imaun of Muscat were flying upon a castle, and upon a large gateway, very like those in some ancient town in this country, but consisting of two portions nearly at right angles with each other, which made the gateway spacious, gloomy, and cool; and here, it would appear, public business was conducted,—a purpose for which the structure was admirably adapted, being open to the sea-breeze in front. Due notice having been given of the British officer's approach, a sort of rabble guard met him at the beach, and conducted him with much noise to the gateway, about a hundred yards distant.

He found Omar Aga, the Governor, seated upon a divan in the inner compartment of the gateway, attended by three of his officers,—all elderly men, with long flowing white beards,

seated somewhat below their chief. They were plainly dressed; but their swords, daggers, and pipes were richly ornamented. Omar Aga's turban was considerably more voluminous than those of his friends; but whether that was a matter of taste or a mark of dignity Herbert knew not. Chairs had been placed for Herbert and the two officers who accompanied him, in front of Omar Aga, who had a considerable attendance of men behind him armed; but their arms and dress had no appearance of regularity. At the Aga's side, but rather behind him, stood Samé, his interpreter; whilst Bombay Jack attended Herbert in the same capacity.

Samé heard Bombay Jack's interpretation of Herbert's complaints with undisguised anger, which Omar Aga clearly shared, though his manner was more decorous. The most ordinary discussions amongst the Arabs themselves,

it may be remarked, are conducted with a vehemence of tone and a violence of gesticulation, which has perhaps a sanative effect upon minds and bodies so habitually abandoned to lassitude and idleness, but which would lead strangers to suppose they would come to blows every instant. Such was the character of the present conference; and as it proceeded, matters grew worse and worse; until at length Herbert, disgusted with useless clamour, rose.

"Say nothing to that impudent rascal," said he, designating Samé; "but repeat, word for word, what I say to the governor, his master."

All was now mute attention; for if Herbert's words were not understood, his tone and manner, though perfectly calm, spoke an universal language.

"I pass over the refusal of supplies, and other violations of justice towards the British

flag. These will be officially laid before the Imaun, and redress demanded. I now only require a pilot, which has been publicly promised by Omar Aga."

This having been literally translated to the governor, Samé replied, in Omar Aga's name, with a positive refusal.

Herbert then put the question to the governor, "If he was to consider that as his, the governor's answer?" And Omar Aga having confirmed it,—

"Tell him," said Herbert, "in my very words, that I have often transacted public business with Arabs in high rank and office, but this is the first time I have known an Arab to forfeit his pledged word."

There could be no doubt that this had been literally translated, for the Arab chief started from his seat, his eyes flashing fire, while he half drew his Damascus blade, looking the very

impersonation of rage and indignation. The grey-bearded senators followed his every movement, whilst the ruder attendants broke into murmurs, clashing their arms, in readiness to do his bidding.

Samé alone winced, when Herbert, smiling scornfully, tapped the hilt of his sword, and repressed the ardour of his little party, who were but too eager for the fray.

Omar Aga appeared to feel that he was both scorned and defied, and that his threatening attitude and tone amused rather than intimidated the British officer; and this, too, in the presence of his people! He sheathed his sword, sat down, and would willingly have resumed the conference; but Herbert, collecting his little party, quitted the Hall of Audience, without deigning to say another word.

One of many passages amongst the islands sheltering the anchorage, had been sounded

and examined; and starting with a breeze which enabled her to overrun the flood-tide, the Petrel was carried safely through a labyrinth of reefs and shoals, and was once more at sea.

Under any other circumstances, the little scene in the gateway would have interested and amused Herbert much; but it now confirmed both him and Daunton in their previous opinion, that Omar Aga and Samé were in league with the pirates. An anxious desire to get hold of the pirates was more than ever entertained by all on board, but a flat dull feeling pervaded the ship on every other subject, and the hours passed heavily. Even the midshipmen's berth, notwithstanding its new-born comforts, had lost its gaiety. Not a joke was uttered, or a laugh heard; for the bright and joyous spirit which had exercised such an inspiring influence on all around, had departed.

Daunton, restored to his personal accommodations and comforts, which, man of habit as he was, had been no trivial sacrifice, seemed to have lost all relish for his usual pursuits and occupations. He was continually moving from his cabin to the deck, and then back again to the cabin, without end or object, prying into everything, and seeing nothing, or rather as if he had been looking for something which he had lost, and missed exceedingly, without very well knowing what it was. People stared and wondered. "'Twas so unlike old Daunty," they said, and said truly.

But it had now become necessary to shape a course somewhere. They had traced the rumour about a ship to Samé, and of course disbelieved it; and as things stood, the absolute necessity for thought and exertion was a god-send.

"We must try the mainland, Herbert,"

said the Captain. "Send for Bombay Jack."

"Pilot," said Herbert, "Omar Aga and Samé knew much more of the pirate than they chose to tell us. The Captain thinks they will have given him notice of our being amongst these islands, and he will probably have taken shelter in some harbour on the main land, at a considerable distance, as you say, he uses such harbours. Tell the Captain what your opinion upon this subject is."

"I tink so, sare, too. I tink him go to Quiloa; we long way past dat. He no tink us turn back; him port deep in de land. I tink he go dere."

"Did you hear anything at Zanzibar, pilot?" said the Captain, "to lead you to think he would go to Quiloa?"

"I hear someting—bery little—people much

fraid Samé—still I hear someting. I ting him gone dere."

"Shape a course for Quiloa, Mr. Marliner," said the Captain.

On making the land about Quiloa two days afterwards,—

"Surely," observed Herbert, "this is a cluster of islands."

"No, sare," replied the pilot; "dat Quiloa you see, sare."

As they approached the bottom of the bay, the low lands by which the hills, looking like islands at a distance, were connected, were distinctly seen. It appeared to be one line of coast, forming a deep inlet, but without any appearance of a harbour.

"A sail! close under the high land," was reported from the mast-head, but immediately afterwards she was lost sight of. Three experienced persons, however, were positive

that they had distinctly seen her white sails.

"She has caught sight of us and furled her sails, sir," said Herbert; "and close under the high land we cannot expect to see her bare spars."

"Probably, very probably," observed the Captain; "but a short time will determine that, by standing on."

She was soon after again seen: it was a brigantine! it was the pirate!

"Can you make out the entrance to Quiloa now?" asked Herbert.

"Yes, sare, him close to it; dat high land by he, one side de entrance."

"Why is he laying outside then?"

"No can help, sare; him ebb-tide very strong in harbour mout; him to anchor."

All was now once more life and spirit on board. They were approaching the bottom of

a deep inlet, gradually narrowing, and though night was approaching, it was hardly possible that the enemy could escape, as the sky was clear, with bright starlight, and would most probably be calm.

"How close can you take us in the dark, pilot?"

"We must anchor, sare, pon de bank, right off de harbour mout. Not too near but him can not pass, and we not see it."

They soon lost sight of the enemy from the increasing darkness, close under the land, though seaward objects might be seen at a considerable distance. The boats were hoisted out; the quarters cleared for action, and the ship was anchored in fifteen fathoms, ready to slip her cable in a moment; and a careful look-out being arranged, they could only wait for daylight. The Captain was always slow to dispatch his boats against a well-armed

ship, so long as there remained a chance of bringing her to action with the ship; but Herbert reported everything in readiness.

"I think," said the Captain, "she cannot escape us now. But these fellows fight, you know, with a halter round their necks."

Herbert walked the deck for some time, though all but the officers and men on the look-out had retired.

His thoughts soon assumed a cheerful tone, for it was not possible the pirate could escape them now; and her capture, would lead to their immediate return to the Cape, perhaps to his promotion; for he had already established considerable claims.

At length, he wrapt his cloak around him and stretched on deck, with a rolled flag for a pillow, he fell asleep. Nothing occurred through the night: all was calm and still, and he was surprised when aroused with the infor-

mation that it would soon be daylight, to find how long he had slept.

All were on the move, but it was still calm. They had not been able to estimate their distance from the enemy, or from the shore, when they had last seen her, and they had neared the land considerably after dark.

"Can you make her out?" said Daunton, as he mounted the companion ladder.

"Not yet, sir," replied Herbert.

The day soon broke, the sun rose, but no pirate was in sight, though they could see distinctly over the low ridge into the harbour, and as the only intervening clump of elevated land was of inconsiderable height, a vessel's mast-head would certainly be visible over it. The only high land formed the starboard side of the entrance whilst the anchorage extended in the opposite direction.

The Captain and Herbert exchanged a glance

of surprise. It was certain she could not have passed them; for there had not been a breath of wind all night.

"That fellow," said Jack Oakum, on the forecastle, "must deal with the devil, for he aint to be seen nowhere."

And a superstitious feeling, embodying some strangely wild, dreamy, indistinct notions of pirates, evil spirits, and flying Dutchmen, gave rise to whispered hints and sagacious nods amongst the elder seamen, which awed and bewildered their juniors, and might with the aid of darkness have created some little alarm; but a bright African sun was flashing down upon them, which dispelled for the time their superstitious terrors, though it threw no light upon the mysterious disappearance of the pirate.

CHAPTER XI.

El Fra Diavolo having in the meantime made the requisite communication to the Governor-General at Mozambique, as well as to Mr. Brine, with the ship in which he was embarked, landed Manoel, and proceeded to the Cape, which she did not reach till after a very tedious passage.

The arrival of a captured pirate with the crew and passengers of the Thames, caused a considerable sensation in Cape Town, where fifty accounts of what had happened quickly became current, each more extravagant and

ridiculous than the other. General Darcie, who had been appointed second in command at the Cape upon his promotion, had embarked for that colony soon after the Brilliant had left Bombay, hoping to arrive before his family should have sailed for India, and had the mortification to learn on his arrival a few days before, that Mrs. Darcie and her children had sailed in the Thames about the same time that he had set out from India to join them.

Little had been thought at the Cape of the rumour which spoke of pirates in the Mozambique, and the General had not even heard it, when one of the various reports relative to the capture of the Thames by the schooner just arrived, suddenly reached him. He flew to Mrs. Vaughan, well knowing that if any letters from Mrs. Darcie should have arrived, she would have them.

"Welcome, my dear General," said Mrs.

Vaughan; "they are all safe, all well, and will soon be here; but I can read no more."

Mrs. Vaughan, with eyes full of tears, placed the letters in the hands of the General.

"They are safe!" she repeated; "God be praised!" and she sank back upon her chair, without seeking to conceal her emotion.

Darcie proceeded to devour eagerly a narrative so full of fearful interest, and all the more forcible, that there was not the slightest taint of exaggeration: it was simple and truthful. At times he started from his seat, and paced the room rapidly, unable to proceed; and then, after a time, more collected, he became once more wholly absorbed in the perilous adventures of those so dear to him. The feelings of the husband and the father shook his inmost soul.

A full hour had elapsed before General Darcie, as firm and resolute a man as lived, could subdue this violent agitation.

"I must see Captain Timmins, my dear friend," he said at length, "and above all, Mr. Chartres. I shall not breathe freely, or be myself, till I have seen him."

He returned the letters to Mrs. Vaughan, and was about to leave the room to seek him —he knew not where,—when Mr. Vaughan, entering, caught his last words.

"I have just seen Chartres," he said. "You will find him at John de Witt's in the Strand-street."

Darcie galloped off, for he had a slight previous acquaintance with Chartres. He threw himself off his horse, mounted the steps, entered the hall, and in an instant our friend Chartres, who stood listlessly yawning amidst a chaos of bags and boxes, found himself, to his great astonishment and embarrassment, fairly locked in the arms of the gallant officer, who at that moment looked more like one

just escaped from Bedlam, than the staid, dignified, and somewhat fastidious General Darcie.

But what are conventional forms to an honest warm-hearted man, when the best and strongest feelings of our nature are stirred at their very source.

"My wife!—my children!" he faltered; "what do I not owe to you!"

The veins of his neck and forehead were fearfully distended, almost to bursting; and had not tears relieved him, such intense excitement might have produced fatal consequences.

"Compose yourself, I beseech you, my dear General," said Chartres, with great self-command, though he was himself moved, for past scenes, never to be forgotten, rushed upon his mind with their original distinctness. "I was but a humble instrument in the hands of a mer-

ciful God — one too amongst many. We left your dear family well, and in excellent hands. You must bear in mind, that I have done no more for you than, had our situations been reversed, you would have done for me."

"I hope so, I hope so," replied Darcie, but would have done—and *have* done—are very different things. But I will not distress you with acknowledgments. We understand each other"

Chartres, by degrees, gave a less serious turn to the conversation, by mentioning some trivial but interesting circumstances, particularly some of little Emma's freaks, adding his warm congratulations upon the distinguished gallantry displayed by young Darby, and describing the desperate courage with which the brave boy had slain the pirate captain. The father's eyes flashed with proud pleasure at this tribute to his son, for there had been no allusion to that part of the subject, in Mrs. Darcie's letter.

The General had much to ask about; and Chartres a great deal to communicate. Yet, strange to say, whilst other persons were freely spoken of, the name of Herbert was not once mentioned; and yet he had acted no inconsiderable part in the scenes discussed. Chartres was a generous-minded man, and Norah's father had found Herbert sufficiently conspicuous in his wife's narrative; why it was, therefore, or how it was, we know not; but it is a fact, that he was not named in this conference.

In reply to a pressing request, that Chartres would take up his residence with the General, who having fortunately found his old mansion still unoccupied, had taken possession of it; our poor friend replied with a melancholy smile, which seemed to say, would to Heaven it could have been so.

"Alas! my dear friend, you little know how troublesome a guest, such an indolent and fanciful valetudinarian would be, and how much more trouble you would have with my native

servants, in such an establishment as yours. Still I value your friendship highly, and shall always be delighted to talk over with you subjects so interesting to us both. We have, however, had a tedious passage, and I hope the Petrel herself will soon arrive."

Chartres' servant now entered with several packets of letters from England, which had accumulated at the post-office. Darcie rose, for he saw large black seals.

"I will call in the evening," he said, "when you will have had leisure to read your letters."

At this moment, Major Singleton was announced.

"I call, Mr. Chartres," he said, "to offer his Excellency's congratulations on your return. Captain Timmins has given us a magnificent account of your generous exertions on behalf of friends so dear to us all. Accept also my own congratulations."

And after a few words more, they both left Chartres to his letters.

"We have all been deeply interested by Timmins's account of the capture of the Thames, General," said Major Singleton, as they entered the street. "You, I understand, have seen letters from Mrs. Darcie herself; most sincerely do I congratulate you." The friends shook hands heartily, and rode off to Mr. Vaughan's house.

"That Chartres is a glorious fellow, Singleton," said his friend; "who would have thought him what he really is. I hope these black seals bode him no ill."

"Far from it," replied the Major. "They will announce to him the important fact, that he has unexpectedly succeeded to a Baronetcy, and about seven thousand a-year, in a ring fence, round a fine old family mansion; and probably much more; for his brother, who luckily for our friend, has been killed by a fall from his horse, was a close-fisted, eccentric animal. But you must excuse me for a while; I had forgotten something I must attend to."

And the Major turned his horse and rode off.

"A Baronet, and seven thousand a-year," said Darcie to himself, thoughtfully; for he had made up his mind that Norah's attractions had been the Promethean torch which had given light and hope to the gallant spirit of Chartres, and converted him from the thing he had seemed to be into a hero of romance.

His reflections upon this interesting subject were disturbed by his arrival at Vaughan's house. His fair friend had now read and re-read Mrs. Darcie's narrative, and was still reading it. He told her of the change in Chartres' position, and it was evident that he took great interest in the circumstance.

"Yes," said Mrs. Vaughan, "it is in the papers. Your friend is now Sir Edwin Chartres, and may return to England when he pleases, where I hope he will regain his health, though I very much doubt it. Is it not a pity that so estimable a man should be such an

invalid; but I fear he will never be much better."

Mrs. Vaughan had seen much in Mrs. Darcie's letters, which the husband appeared to have overlooked. She saw the important part which Herbert had played throughout, and the impression it had made even upon the mother. She knew Norah's character and disposition well, and the rather so, because she fully sympathized with her. She knew, too, the father's foible, and that his favourite project was, to see his daughter what is called advantageously married. Looking at all these things, with the strong intuitive perception of woman, and considering that Norah and Herbert must necessarily see so much of each other, Mrs. Vaughan discerned nothing but vexation and trouble for all parties in the half-formed views of the affectionate but somewhat worldly father.

The fact that their thoughts had taken such different directions upon this subject had led

to a silence of some duration, which was broken by the entrance of Mr. Vaughan.

"I am very glad to have found you here, Darcie," he said; "for I have been talking over the probability of the Petrel's arrival with the officers of the Thames; and the Admiral also desires me to tell you that he thinks it possible our friends may arrive within a week. At least there is nothing in Daunton's instructions to prevent it."

"We must look to your house for you, General," said Mrs. Vaughan, glad to change the subject, "and lose no time in getting it ready."

"I have not congratulated you," said Mr. Vaughan, "upon the gallant conduct of my young friend Darby; Mr. Herbert declared to Mrs. Darcie that Darby was the hero of the day; and they all describe in glowing terms the desperate courage with which Herbert and he rushed into the cavern, and rescued our dear friends from the band of pirates."

"I cannot think of it without shuddering," observed Mrs. Vaughan; "and it seems strange that the son of my dear old friend, little Frank Herbert, should have become a leader of armed men and the rescuer of your precious family, when it is but as yesterday that he was a beautiful child playing at his mother's knee. But Frank was even then very daring."

And why did this little panegyric upon Frank Herbert, so kindly and so skilfully thrown in, grate upon the father's feelings? And why, too, did Mrs. Vaughan introduce it, if she knew that it would do so?

To both of them did present circumstances, viewed from different points, cast shadows before, wholly irreconcileable with each other; and of this both were now fully conscious.

END OF VOL. II.

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